
HOME LIFE
IN SONG

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Catharine M. Willis,
Westbury,
L. I.

HOME LIFE IN SONG WITH THE POETS OF TO-DAY.

HOME LIFE IN SONG

WITH

THE POETS OF TO-DAY.

I. BABYHOOD. II. CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH. III. HOME LIFE.
IV. GRANDPARENTS. V. LOOKING BACKWARD.

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NOTE.

In this collection the compiler has sought to express some of the many phases and experiences of Home Life. No attempt has been made to secure absolute unity in classification or expression; the simple purpose having been to gather—not from the published volumes of well-known authors, but from other sources—the magazine and newspaper—a portion of the many excellent verses that are constantly floating through them. It is hoped that in this more accessible and permanent form they may prove acceptable to all who cherish the common incidents and memories of Domestic Life.

A. D. F. R.



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BABYHOOD.



BABYHOOD.

THIS BABY OF OURS.

THERE'S not a blossom of beautiful May,
Silver of daisy or daffodil gay,
Nor the rosy bloom of apple-tree flowers,
Fair as the face of this baby of ours.

You can never find on a bright June day
A bit of fair sky so cheery and gay,
Nor the haze on the hill, in noonday hours,
Blue as the eyes of this baby of ours.

There's not a murmur of wakening bird,
The clearest, sweetest, that ever was heard
In the tender hush of the dawn's still hours,
Sweet as the voice of this baby of ours.

There's no gossamer silk of tasseled corn,
No flimsiest thread of the shy wood-fern,
Not even the cobweb spread over the flowers,
Fine as the hair of this baby of ours.

There's no fairy shell by the sounding sea,
No wild-rose that nods on the windy lea,
No blush of the sun through April's soft showers,
Pink as the palms of this baby of ours.

May the dear Lord spare her to us, we pray,
For many a long and sunshiny day,
Ere He takes to bloom in Paradise bowers,
This wee bit darling—this baby of ours.

THE "SWEETEST SPOT."

THE sweetest spot in the house to me
Is the spot which holds my treasure wee.
What is my treasure? Come and see—
Only a blue-eyed baby.
Only a bundle of dimples and love,
Dropped in my arms from somewhere above;
A white-winged, cooing, and nestling dove,
Or—a bundle of mischief, maybe.

Now creeping here, now creeping there,
Calling me hither and everywhere;
Playing with sunbeams on the floor,
Cooing-"a-gooing" over and o'er;
Climbing up and clambering down,
Bumping and bruising his tiny crown;
Sticking his toes through the dainty socks,
Soiling and tearing his dainty frocks;
Falling and crying and catching his breath,
Till mamma is frightened almost to death;
Laughing and shouting in frolic and play,
Having a world of his nonsense to say;
Showing the dimples in cheek and in chin,
Where frolic and mischief peep out and in;
Asking for kisses and *getting* them, too,
On cheek and on chin and on eyes so blue;
Ready for play when the sunbeams rise,
Ready for sleep with the twilight skies;
And the sweetest spot in the house, you see,
Is the spot which holds my treasure wee—
My blue-eyed baby, my bundle of love,
My white-winged, cooing, and nestling dove;
And long may he find his haven of rest
In his mother's arms, on his mother's breast.

SHALL THE BABY STAY?

IN a little brown house,
With scarce room for a mouse,
Came with morning's first ray,
One remarkable day,
(Though who told her the way
I am sure I can't say)
A young lady so wee
That you scarcely could see
Her small speck of a nose;
And, to speak of her toes,
Though it seems hardly fair
Since they surely were there,
Keep them covered we must;
You must take them on trust.

Now this little brown house,
With scarce room for a mouse,
Was quite full of small boys,
With their books and their toys,
Their wild bustle and noise.

"My dear lads," quoth papa,
"We've too many by far;
Tell us what can we do
With this damsel so new?
We've no room for her here,
So to me 'tis quite clear,
Though it gives me great pain,
I must hang her again
On the tree whence she came,
(Do not cry, there's no blame)
With her white blanket round her,
Just as Nurse Russell found her."

Said stout little Ned,
"I'll stay all day in bed,
Squeezed up nice and small
Very close to the wall."
Then spoke Tommie, "I'll go
To the cellar below;
I'll just travel about,
But not try to get out;
Till you're all fast asleep.
And so quiet I'll be
You'll not dream it is me."
Then flaxen-haired Will:
"I'll be dreadfully still;
On the back-stairs I'll stay,
Way off, out of the way."

Master Johnny the fair
Shook his bright curly hair,
"Here's a nice place for me,
Dear papa, do you see?
I just fit in so tight
I could stand here all night."
And a niche in the wall
Held his figure so small.

Quoth the father, "Well done,
My brave darlings, come on!
Here's a shoulder for Will,
Pray sit still, sir, sit still!
Valiant Thomas, for thee,
A good seat on my knee,
And Edward, thy brother,
Can perch on the other,
Baby John, take my back;
Now, who says we can't pack?"

So love gives us room
And our birdie shall stay.
We'll keep her, my boys,
Till God takes her away.

MY BIRD.

ERE last year's moon had left the sky,
A birdling sought my Indian nest,
And folded, oh, so lovingly,
Her tiny wings upon my breast.

From morn till evening's purple tinge,
In winsome helplessness she lies;
Two rose leaves, with a silken fringe,
Shut softly on her starry eyes.

There's not in Ind a lovelier bird;
Broad earth owns not a happier nest:
O God, Thou hast a fountain stirred,
Whose waters never more shall rest!

This beautiful, mysterious thing,
This seeming visitant from heaven,
This bird with the immortal wing,
To me, to me, Thy hand has given.

The pulse first caught its tiny stroke,
The blood its crimson hue, from mine;
This life, which I have dared invoke,
Henceforth is parallel with Thine.

A silent awe is in my room;
I tremble with delicious fear;
The future, with its light and gloom—
Time and Eternity are here.

Doubts—hopes, in eager tumult rise;
Hear, O my God, one earnest prayer:
Room for my bird in Paradise,
And give her angel plumage there!

A WEE SANG ON A WEE SUBJECT.

OH, my bonnie Mary,
Winsome little fairy,
Ever licht and airy—
Singin' a' the day;
Lauchin' aye sae sweetly,
Actin' sae discreetly,
Winnin' hearts completely,
Witchin' Mary May.

Cheekies red as roses,
Lippies sweet as posies,
Ilka charm discloses,
Quite a lurin' fay;
Eenie ever glancin',
Leggies ever dancin',
Life an' love enchantin'—
Bonnie Mary May.

Hoo I lo'e thee, Mary!
Witchin' little fairy,
A palace were a prairie,
Wantin' sic a stay;
Sic gladness floats aboot thee,
Princes widna flout thee.
Life were cauld without thee,
Little Mary May.

THE BABY I LOVE.

THIS is the baby I love!
The baby that can not talk;
The baby that can not walk
The baby that just begins to creep;
The baby that's cuddled and rock'd to sleep;
Oh, this is the baby I love!

This is the baby I love!
The baby that's never cross;
The baby that papa can toss;
The baby that crows when held aloft;
The baby that's rosy and round and soft;
Oh, this is the baby I love!

This is the baby I love!
The baby that laughs when I peep
To see is it still asleep;
The baby that coos and frowns and blinks
When left alone—as it sometimes *thinks;*
Oh, this is the baby I love!

This is the baby I love!
The baby that lies on my knee,
And dimples and smiles on me
While I strip it and bathe it and kiss it—Oh!
Till with bathing and kissing 'tis all aglow;
Yes, this is the baby I love!

This is the baby I love!
The baby all freshly dressed;
That, waking, is never at rest;
That plucks at my collar and pulls my hair
Till I look like a witch—but I do not care;
Oh, this is the baby I love!

This is the baby I love!
The baby that understands,
And dances with feet and hands,
And a sweet, little, whinnying, eager cry
For the nice warm breakfast that waits it close by;
Oh, this is the baby I love!

This is the baby I love!
The baby that tries to talk;
The baby that longs to walk;
And oh, its mamma will wake some day
To find that her baby has—*run away!*
My baby!—the baby I love!

BABY'S FIRST STEP.

'TWAS a very simple lesson,
So simple—yet deep and sweet.
'Twas taught by our year-old baby,
Whose wee little dancing feet
Were tottering on the threshold
Of the open nursery door,
His bright eyes intently watching
A new toy upon the floor.

All untried and untested
Were those tiny, active feet;
Never one step had they taken
In nursery or on the street;
But the toy lay far beyond them,
And our baby's eager eyes
Danced, and he crowed in his gladness
As he saw the glittering prize.

"Come, little boy; come and take it;
Father will not let you fall."
He lifted his face and listened,
As he heard the gentle call;
Turned his sweet blue eyes, and seeing
A strong hand on either side,
Gathered all his faith and courage,
And his first weak footstep tried.

MY BABY.

WITH frolicsome freaks,
And rosy, red cheeks,
My baby lies waiting for me;
He thinks not of crying,
But ever is trying
To sing a glad song in his glee.

His parted lips show
Three teeth in a row,
As white and as precious as pearls;
And his soft, silken hair
O'er his forehead so fair
Falls in dark, thick-clustering curls.

His eyes, like two stars,
Peep out from the bars
Of his crib, as he watches for me,
And his pink little toes,
Down under the clothes,
Are kicking about to be free.

I'm coming, my boy!
My treasure, my joy!
You shall wait no longer for me;
But we'll up and away,
And be merry and gay,
Out under the old maple tree.

BABY.

BABY, baby, on my breast,
Oh, my little one, sleep sound!
While the red clouds warm the west,
And the bright leaves light the ground.
Mother's love is round you here;
God's love, too, is close and near;
Full and happy be thy rest,
Baby, baby, on my breast!

Baby, baby, at my knee,
Lift your eyes up, let them show
All the dreams I can not see;
Talk and tell me, make me know
How the world's dim puzzles seem
To your soul's pure waking dream.
Bring your marbles all to me,
Baby, baby, at my knee.

Baby, baby, at my side,
Ah, your cheek just reaches mine,
So, time will not be denied;
Glossy braids are smooth and fine,
And I read within your eyes
Womanhood's fair mysteries,
Baby, baby, at my side,
Tall enough to be a bride!

Baby, baby, far from me,
Lines of care have crossed your brow,
Little children climb your knee,
Fill your heart and household now,
"Mother," is my baby's name,
Yet to me, she's still the same;
Still the child I rocked to rest
As a baby on my breast.

THE NURSE'S SONG.

WHEN nursery lamps are veiled, and nurse is singing
In accents low,
Timing her music to the cradle's swinging,
Now fast, now slow—

Singing of Baby Bunting, soft and furry
In rabbit cloak,
Or rock-a-byed amid the toss and flurry
Of wind-swept oak?

Of Boy Blue sleeping with his horn beside him;
Of my son John,
Who went to bed (let all good boys deride him)
With stockings on;

Of sweet Bo-Peep, following her lambkins straying;
Of Dames in shoes;
Of cows, considerate, 'mid the Piper's playing,
Which tune to choose;

Of Gotham's wise men bowling o'er the billow,
Or him, less wise,
Who chose rough bramble-bushes for a pillow,
And scratched his eyes.

It may be, while she sings, that through the portal
Soft footsteps glide,
And, all invisible to grown-up mortal,
At cradle side

Sits Mother Goose herself, the dear old mother,
And rocks and croons,
In tones which Baby hearkens, but no other,
Her old-new tunes!

I think it must be so, else why, years after,
Do we retrace
And ring with shadowy, recollected laughter,
Thoughts of that face;

Seen, yet unseen, beaming across the ages
Brimful of fun
And wit and wisdom, baffling all the sages
Under the sun?

A grown-up child has place still, which no other
May dare refuse,
I, grown-up, bring this offering to our Mother,
To Mother Goose,

And, standing with the babies at that olden,
Immortal knee,
I seem to feel her smile, benign and golden,
Falling on me.

THE HAPPY HOUR.

THE busy day is over,
The household work is done;
The cares that fret the morning
Have faded with the sun;
And, in the tender twilight,
I sit in happy rest,
With my darling little baby
Asleep upon my breast.

White lids, with silken fringes,
Shut out the waning light;
A little hand, close folded,
Holds mamma's fingers tight;
And in their soft, white wrappings,
At last in perfect rest,
Two dainty feet are cuddled
Like birdies in a nest.

All hopes and loves unworthy
Depart at this sweet hour;
All pure and noble longings
Renew their holy power;
For Christ, who, in the Virgin,
Our motherhood has blest,
Is near to every woman
With a baby on her breast.

THE SLEEPY LITTLE SISTER.

I SAT, one evening, watching
A little golden head
That was nodding o'er a picture book;
And pretty soon I said,
"Come, darling, you are sleepy,
Don't you want to go to bed?"
"No," she said, "I isn't sleepy,
But I can't hold up my head.

"Just now it feels so heavy,
There isn't any use;
Do let me lay it down to rest
On dear old Mother Goose!
I sha'n't shut up my eyes at all,
And so you need not fear;
I'll keep 'em open all the while
To see this picture here."

And then, as I said nothing,
She settled for a nap;
One curl was resting on the frill
Of the old lady's cap;
Her arms embraced the children small
Inhabiting the shoe—
"Oh, dear," thought I, "what shall I say?
For this will never do."

I sat awhile in silence,
Till the clock struck its "ding, ding,"
And then I went around and kissed
The cunning little thing.
The violets unfolded
As I kissed her, and she said,
"I isn't sleepy, sister,
But I guess I'll go to bed."

LITTLE TYRANT.

LET every sound be dead;
Baby sleeps.
The Emperor softly tread!
Baby sleeps.
Let Mozart's music stop!
Let Phidias' chisel drop!
Baby sleeps.
Demosthenes be dumb!
Our tyrant's hour has come!
Baby sleeps.

BABY'S COLOR.

SCARLET is my baby's color,
Color of her dainty lips;
Scarlet is the shade that matches
Splendor that her eyes eclipse.
Scarlet sets her face in glory,
Sunset flame and twilight eyes;
Eyes that far outshine the fairest
Star in all the evening skies.

Every color suits my baby!
With her shining gold-brown hair,
And her dark, dark eyes of splendor,
What may not my baby wear?
Blue is like the smile of heaven
In the dimples of her face;
Buff enhances while it softens
Every witching baby-grace.

White adorns her till her garments
Seem the robes that angels wear,
And a crown is in the sunshine
Falling on her silken hair.
Yet, my baby, how I tremble
When, in robes of snowy white,
I have hushed you into slumber
For the long, long, dreamful night:

Tremble, lest the angels, finding
Baby in her robes of white,
Think her but a little wanderer
From the golden shores of light.
Earth is rough; yet oh, good angels,
Leave my baby yet awhile,
For the darkness and the shadow
Flee before her sunny smile.

I will keep her, oh, good angels,
Free from every sinful guile;
I will teach her holy lessons,
Leave my baby yet awhile.
Do not look upon her beauty,
Lest you take her for your own;
She is mine, oh, pitying angels—
All my heart to her has grown.

Leave her though you love her, angels,
And the shadows, long and deep,
Fall athwart the toilsome journey
Of "Life's cold and slippery steep."
Leave her—I will bear the burdens,
I will keep the child from harm—
I will shelter her and shield her
From each bitter raging storm.

Nay, nay, angels, do not frown so,
I can guard her but with prayer;
I am weak; but God is mighty,
And His love is everywhere.
He will help me bring the lambkin
Safe at last into His fold,
With her dark, dark eyes of splendor,
And her brown hair tinged with gold.

A MOTHER'S DITTY.

IT'S aboot my chubby bit bairn
That I wanted a word to tell,
I'm sure his match is no to be fand
In the ring o' the Heigh Kirk Bell.

The lasses (an' I hae three),
I may say they are a' verra well;
But they ne'er gi'ed me the hauf o' the thocht
As this wee bit steering chiel.

Look at him rin to his faither,
I'm sure it's a sicht to see;
The twa o' them screechin' and lauchin',
And roaring wi' verra glee.

See! Up the wee man he catches
By the oxters, and sends him awa'
Near to the roof. And I gie a start,
As I see that he's like to fa'.

But his faither is there to catch him,
In a faither's ain loving airms;
And then sic a squealin' and kittlin',
Dispel a' my silly alarms.

And they rumple and sprauchle aboot—
Look noo, on the floor they're doon;
And they tumble and caper and shout,
Eneuch to deeve the toun.

Noo faither's his galloping horse,
And the wee man "gees" and "wo's;"
He hobbles and rides him to London,
And on the racket goes.

And then as he hugs his daddie,
A prood, prood man is he;
But o' that wee fair-haired laddie
He'll never be fonder than me.

When I look in his bonnie blue een,
My ain begin to blink,
As I wonder if e'er he'll turn out bad;
Of that I daur hardly think.

For noo as he sits on my knee,
Wi' his airm flung roun' my neck,
He cuddles and kisses his mammy sae fond,
Till my heart is like to break.

For if the wee man should ever
Gae awa' on the road that's wrang,
I kenna what faither himself wad do,
But I to my grave wad gang.

So to the Lord I whisper
A prayer aboon my wean,
That he may be kept frae sorrow,
And suffering, and sin, and pain.

Lang may my jewel be spared,
And aye to his mither be kind;
Then I kiss the wee lips and brush off the tear,
And leave a' thae shadows behind.

DREAM, MY BABY.

MOTHER'S baby, rock and rest,
Little birds are fast asleep.
Close beneath her mother-breast,
Safe the bird her brood will keep.
Oh! my nestling, mother sings,
Close within the mother-arms,
Fold thy little, unfledged wings,
Safe from any rude alarms.
Sweet, my baby, on my breast
Dream your happy dreams and rest.
Rest, oh! rest.

Ah! my baby, from the nest
Little birds will some day fly
To the east and to the west,
Wild their pretty wings to try.
But, fly they fast, my bird, or far,
Never can they find the spot,
Under sun or any star,
Where the mother-love is not.
Sweet, my baby, on my breast
Dream your happy dreams and rest.
Rest, oh! rest.

Oh! my baby, mother prays,
As she clasps you closer still,
All sweet things for coming days,
And not any earthly ill.
Always, child, remember this:
Mother's heart is warm and true,
And she tells you, with a kiss,
There'll be always room for you.
Sweet, my baby, on my breast,
Dream your happy dreams and rest.
Rest, oh! rest.

AN UNFINISHED PRAYER.

"Now I lay"—say it, darling;
"Lay me," lisped the tiny lips
Of my daughter, kneeling, bending
O'er her folded finger-tips.

"Down to sleep—to sleep," she murmured,
And the curly head dropped low.
"I pray the Lord," I gently added,
"You can say it all, I know."

"Pray the Lord"—the words came faintly,
Fainter still—"My soul to keep;"
Then the tired head fairly nodded,
And the child was fast asleep.

But the dewy eyes half opened
When I clasped her to my breast,
And the dear voice softly whispered,
"Mamma, God knows all the rest."

Oh, the trusting, sweet confiding
Of that child-heart! Would that I
Thus might trust my Heavenly Father,
He who hears my humblest cry.

THE WEE-BIT BAIRN.

WE ha'e a wee-bit bairn at hame,
Sae blithesome, cannie bright,
That ever syne the day he came
Has filled the house wi' light.

He now is twa years old, or mair,
A' glib o' tongue and foot;
He climbs up ilka fatal stair,
He claims ilk cast-off boot.

Barefit he toddles roun' the streets,
Wi' gran'sire close behin';
Giving ilk person that he meets
Piece o' his childish min'.

Who kens the wee thing, what'll he be
When years a score ha'e gaun?
Gladding his mither's grateful e'e,
Piercing her breast wi' thorn!

God gie His angels charge to keep
The bairnie, lest he stray;
And though in death we fa' asleep,
Show him the narrow way.

THREE IN A BED.

GAY little velvet coats,
One, two, three;
Any home happier
Could there be?
Topsey and Johnny
And sleepy Ned,
Purring so cosily,
Three in a bed.

Woe to the stupid mouse,
Prowling about!
Old mother Pussy
Is on the lookout.
Little cats, big cats,
All must be fed,
In the sky parlor
Three in a bed.

Mother's a gypsy puss,—
Often she moves,
Thinking much travel
Her children improves.
High-minded family,
Very well bred;
No falling out, you see!
Three in a bed.

THE BIRD'S RETURN.

"WHERE have you been, little birdie,—
Where have you been so long?"

"Warbling in glee
Far o'er the sea,
And learning for you a new song,
My sweet—
Learning for you a new song."

"Why did you go, little birdie,—
Why did you go from me?"

"Winter was here,
Leafless and drear;
And so I flew over the sea,
My sweet—
So I flew over the sea."

"What did you see, little birdie,—
What did you see each day?"

"Sunshine and flowers,
Blossoms and bowers,
And pretty white lambkins at play,
My sweet—
Pretty white lambkins at play."

"Who kept you safe, little birdie,—
Who kept you safe from all harm?"

"The Father of all,
Of great and of small:
He sheltered me under His arm,
My sweet—
Under His dear loving arm."

BABY ASLEEP.

TWO little dimpled hands
Chubby and warm,
Two little rosy cheeks
Perfect in form;

Two tiny golden curls
On her pure brow,
Resting so daintily
Always—as now:

Two little heavy eyes
Dewy with sleep,
Angels above them
Vigil will keep.

Jesus will care for thee
Safe in His love,
Dream, little slumberer,
Watched from above.

AFTER ALL.

DANCING like a sunbeam,
Darting here and there,
Hiding 'neath the table,
Peeping round a chair,
Making merry music
With her laughter sweet,
And the roguish patter
Of her flying feet.
Papa hears the frolic;
Rover joins the fun;
Who would think it's bed-time
For my little one!

On a snowy pillow
A little golden head;
A dainty white-robed figure
In a cradle bed.
Blue eyes softly closing,
Red lips smiling sweet;
Quiet, dimpled fingers;
Quiet, dimpled feet.
Listening in the doorway,
I hear a sweet voice call;
"Mamma, mamma dearie,
I love you after all!"

After all, dear Saviour,
When my closing eyes,
See the shadows creeping
O'er the evening skies;
After all the straying
Of my wayward feet;
After all my erring,
May Thy mercy sweet
Hear the trembling accents
From my lips that fall:
"Jesus, precious Saviour,
I love Thee after all!"

LULLABY.

BYE, Baby, day is over,
Bees are drowsing in the clover;
Bye, Baby, bye.
Now the sun to bed is gliding,
All the pretty flowers are hiding;
Bye, Baby, bye.

Bye, Baby, birds are sleeping,
One by one the stars are peeping;
Bye, Baby, bye.
In the far-off sky the twinkle,
While the cows come, tinkle, tinkle;
Bye, Baby, bye.

Bye, Baby, mother holds thee,
Loving, tender care enfolds thee:
Bye, Baby, bye.
Angels in thy dreams caress thee,
Through the darkness guard and bless thee;
Bye, Baby, bye.

AT NIGHT.

THE little weary wingèd bees
Give up their honey-quest,
And all the little singing birds
Fly home and go to rest.

The butterflies fold up at last
Their shining, golden crowns;
And daisies, in their wee white cups,
Sleep on the dewy downs.

The cattle, with their tinkling bells,
Come home across the wold;
And you're the only little lamb
That's left without the fold.

Then come, my pretty one, 'tis time
Thou, too, shouldst find thy rest;

The violet's eyes, as blue as thine,
Droop on each dewy breast.

And buttercups, adown the lane,
Are folded from the dark,
And they'll be earlier out than you,
And hear the first brown lark.

Then haste, before the stars climb up
The blue walls of the skies;
For sure you would not let them see
Such drooping little eyes.

Fear not the shadow, for God keeps
Awake through all the night;
To make our sleep more sweet and calm,
He takes away the light.

BABY'S TOES.

Oh, the tiny, curled-up treasure,
Just as cute as cute can be!
Come and help me count them, Madgie,
While the baby bends to see;

Peeps demurely over dainty
Skirts, drawn up to dimpled knees.
Hey, my lady Lily! whose two
Roly-poly feet are these?

See the darling's round-eyed wonder—
Does she really know they're hers?
Now she reaches down to feel them,
While new triumph in her stirs.

Crow your fill, my little lady!
Those are your own cunning toes,
Round, and soft, and fat, and funny,
And—how many? Madgie knows!

Call them lily-buds to please her?
Madgie says they are too pink,
Say ten roses and two posies!
Rather rose-buds, don't you think?

Come, wee toes, lie still; be covered;
You've cut capers quite enough;
If you don't, we'll kiss and put you
Each one in a paper ruff.

BABY'S DAY.

The reason I call it "Baby's Day"
Is funny enough to tell;
The first thing she did was give "syrup of squills"
To dolly to make her well;
And then when I told her how wrong it was,
She said, with a quivering sigh,
"I'm sorry I made her so sticky, mamma,
But I couldn't let dolly die."

Then comforted wholly she went away,
And was just as still as a mouse,
And I thought to be sure I should find her at once
In the nursery playing "house;"
But, lo! on the way as I started to look,
A queer little piece I found,
Just like a center of snowy lawn
That the scissors had scalloped round.

I cried "O, baby! what have you done?
You have been to somebody's drawer,
And taken from out of the handkerchief pile
The most beautiful one that you saw!"
And then the dear little head went down
Pathetic as it could be,
While she sobbed, "There was nothing for me to cut,
And I thought I'd take two or three!"

It was only a little later on,
That the water began to splash,
And I jumped and found she was rubbing away
On her sister's holiday sash;
But, catching a look of utter dismay,
As she lifted her innocent eyes,
She whispered: "Don't worry, I'll wash it all *clean*,
And hang it up till it dries."

But the funny mishaps of that wonderful day
I could not begin to relate;

The boxes of buttons and pins she spilled,
Like a cherub pursued by fate!
And still, all the while, the dear little dove
Was fluttering 'round her nest,
And the only thing I really *could* do
Was to smooth out her wings on my breast.

But the day drifted on till it came to an end,
And the great moon rose in sight,
And the dear soft lids o'er the dear soft eyes
Dropped tenderly their good-night.
And I thought, as I looked on her lying asleep,
I was glad (for once in a way),
That my beautiful child was human enough
For a mischievous "Baby Day."

LULU'S COMPLAINT.

I's a poor 'ittle sorrowful baby,
For B'idget is way down stairs;
My titten has st'ached my finder,
And Dolly won't say her p'ayers.

I haint seen my bootiful mamma
Since-ever so lon' ado;
An' I ain't her tunnin'est baby
No londer, for B'idget says so.

My ma's got another *new* baby;
Dod dived it—he did—yesterday,
An' it kies, it kies, oh, so defful!
I wis' he would tate it away.

I don't want no "sweet 'ittle sister!"
I want my dood mamma, I do;
I want her to tiss me, an' tiss me,
An' tall me her p'ecious Lulu!

I dess my bid papa will b'in' me
A 'ittle dood titten some day.
Here's nurse wid my mamma's new baby,
I wis' s'e would tate it away.

Oh, oh, what tunnin' red finders!
It sees me yite o' its eyes!
I dess we will teep it, and dive it
Some tanny whenever it kies.

I dess I will dive it my Dolly
To play wid mos' every day;
And I dess, I dess—Say, B'idget,
As' Dod not to tate it away.

MAMMA'S STORY.

"TELL us a story, mamma dear,"
The children cried one day.
"The rain falls fast. It is going to last,
And we are all tired of play."

Ah! pleading eyes and winning tones,
How could they be denied?
So mamma began in merry strain,
And she laid her work aside:

"There was an old woman that lived in a shoe,
And of all the children that ever you knew,
Hers was the wildest, funniest crew;
Do you wonder she didn't know what to do?

"There were Ella, and Nell, and Mary Belle,
Laurie, Laura, and Maud Estelle,
Sarah, Sammy, and Josephine,
Norah, Norval, and Madeline,
Lillian, Archibald, and Harry,
Christopher, Charlie, Pete, and Carrie,
Jemmy, Johnny, and Theodore,
And over a half a dozen more.

"And then such a terrible time, 'twas said,
She had in getting them all to bed.
And supper, alas! was such a dread,
Especially when they cried for bread.
One night she threatened to whip them all,
And reached for the switch upon the wall.

My! how the mad-cap urchins flew
In and out of the poor old shoe;
Over each other they madly dash,
The old lady after them like a flash.
Through a hole in the worn-out sole,
Back and forth at each button-hole;
Out at the top and in at the toe,
Around and under, away they go.

"Finally, wearied out with fun,
They drop in their places one by one,
And not till her house is still as death,
Does the old woman pause to recover breath."

ANITA AND HER DOLLS.

FAMILY-laden,
Wee, wise maiden—
Knits her brow in dainty knots;
How to dolly
Cure of folly
Occupies her busy thoughts.
"Dollie's wet her
Feet to get her
Posies, in the morning dew;
Sure to be sick—
Cold or colic—
Like as not the measles, too

"There is Freddy,
Always ready
Into awful 'fairs to fall:
Bad as Rosy—
Doodness knows, I
Don't know how to manage 'tall!

"Jack or Norah's
Telled a story!
One or t'uver ate ma's cake!
While there's silly,
Greedy Willy,
Got a drefful stomach ache!

"Naughty Bessie
Tored her dress; she
Wants anuver one, I spose;
I tell you what
It tates a lot
Of work to teep my dolls in tose!"

Look! she lays her
Down by Cæsar—
What can be the matter, now?
Blue eyes closing,
Blinking, dozing—
Wee white hands and lily brow—

Cheeks so waxen,
Tresses flaxen,
Footsteps, that a fairy seems—
All now wander
Over yonder,
In the happy land of dreams!

A HINT.

OUR Daisy lay down
In her little nightgown,
And kissed me again and again,
On forehead and cheek,
On lips that would speak,
But found themselves shut, to their gain.

Then, foolish, absurd,
To utter a word,
I asked her the question so old
That wife and that lover
Ask over and over,
As if they were surer when told!

There, close at her side,
"Do you love me?" I cried;
She lifted her golden-crowned head;
A puzzled surprise
Shone in her gray eyes—
"Why, that's why I kiss you!" she said.

GOING UP.

UP and up the baby goes,
Up to papa's shoulder.
Now she clings to papa's nose—
Now, becoming bolder,
How she flings her arms and crows!
Do you think the darling knows
How strong the arms that hold her?

Up and up the baby goes,
 Taller, wiser, older;
As the calyx holds the rose,
 Childish years enfold her;
By and by they shall enclose
From the woman and the rose;
 Then, O Father, hold her!

On the heights of womanhood,
 Hold her, Heavenly Father;
Lest, forgetting what is good,
 She be carried rather
Down with folly's multitude
Into error's mazy wood
 Where the shadows gather.

Up and up the baby goes;
 Heavenly Father, give her
Heart to feel for others' woes,
 Hands of helping ever;
Let her bloom, when life shall close,
Like a white immortal rose
 By the crystal river.

TELLING A STORY.

LITTLE Blue-eyes is sleepy,
 Come here and be rocked to sleep.
What shall I tell you, darling?
 The story of Little Bo Peep?
Or of the cows in the garden,
 Or the children who ran away?
If I'm to be story-teller
 What shall I tell you, pray?

"Tell me"—the Blue-eyes opened
 Like pansies when they blow,
"Of the baby in the manger,
 The little child-Christ, you know.
I like to hear that 'tory
 The best of all you tell."
And my four-year-old nestles closer
 As the twilight shadows fell.

And I told my darling over
 The old, old tale again:
Of the baby born in the manger,
 And the Christ who died for men,
Of the great warm heart of Jesus,
 And the children whom He blest,
Like the blue-eyed boy who listened
 As he lay upon my breast.

And I prayed, as my darling slumbered,
 That my child, with eyes so sweet,
Might learn from his Saviour's lesson
 And sit at the Master's feet.
Pray God he may never forget it,
 But always love to hear
The tender and touching story
 That now he holds so dear.

GOING TO BED.

OUR Fannie Angelina
 Didn't want to go to bed,—
Her reasons would you know? then
 Let me tell you what she said
At eight o'clock precisely,
 At the close of yesterday,
Her mamma in the trundle-bed
 Had tucked her snug away.
"It isn't time to go to bed,
 The clock goes round too quick;
It hurts my back to lie in bed
 And almost makes me sick:
I want to show my Uncle George
 My pretty birthday ring;
And sing him 'Jesus loves me,'
 For he likes to hear me sing;
My dollie, Haddynewya,
 Her yellow dress is thin,
And she's sitting on the horse-block,
 I forgot to bring her in;
I want to go and get her,
 She'll catch a cold and die;
I want to get my hankachick,
 I guess I've got to cry.
I said I'd wait till papa comes,
 I wonder what he'll think;
There's something hurts me in my throat,
 I want to get a drink.
I guess I'd rather get it in
 My little silver cup—
What makes me have to go to bed
 When you are staying up?"
So Fannie Angelina
 Was determined not to do it.
Yet she drifted off to Nod land,
 Poor child, before she knew it.

The queen who reigns in Nod land
Shut her willful eyes so tight,
They quite forgot to open
Till the sun was shining bright.

MAMMA'S KISSES.

A KISS when I awake in the morning,
A kiss when I go to bed,
A kiss when I burn my finger,
A kiss when I bump my head.

A kiss when my bath is over,
A kiss when my bath begins;
My mamma is full of kisses,
As full as nurse is of pins.

A kiss when I play with my rattle,
A kiss when I pull her hair;
She covered me over with kisses
The day I fell from the stair.

A kiss when I give her trouble,
A kiss when I give her joy;
There's nothing like mamma's kisses
For her own little baby boy.

THE MOTHER'S CRADLE SONG.

SING him a cradle song,
Tender and low;
Tell him how Jesus came
Long, long ago:
Came as a little one,
Lowly and mild,
God's own eternal Son,
Yet Mary's child.

Long years may come and pass,
And there shall be
Under the churchyard grass
Slumber for thee;
Yet shall thy song live on
Still in his life,
Sweeter when thou art gone
Out of the strife.

Sorrow will come with time,
Faith may grow cold;
Truth, like a silver chime,
Calls to the fold;
Calls to the roving sheep
(Gone far astray,)
"Come, and thy Lord shall keep
Spoilers away."

Say not the words are weak,
Scorned of the wise;
Doth not the Master speak
In lowly guise?
He shall thy weakness make
Holy and strong,
And thy poor song shall wake
A sweeter song.

THE WEE BIT SHOON.

THE wee bit shoon she used to wear
They gav me aften greet;
At gloamin' time could I aince mair
But haud those pink-white feet.

But haud those feet within my han's,
An' hear her ripplin' glee,
A warl' o' houses an' o' lan's,
Hoo empty wad they be.

Those tiny palms, could I but taste,
Sae aft to me stretched out,
The earth wad be nae mair a waste,
My heid nae whirl about.

The curls, hauf-grown, that graced her broo,
The glintin' o' her een,
The tremblin' o' her matchless mou',
Still haunt me, though unseen.

Wad death gie back, for ane short hour,
The lapfu' that was mine;
But, ah! but, ah! I'd hae nae power
The treasure to resign.

OUT IN THE RAIN.

A ROUND little face, peeping out of a shawl,
That was trying to cover it, dimples and all;

A fat little hand pushing sturdily up,
And catching the drops in its mite of a cup;
A frolicsome baby that didn't complain,
Though mamma and he were out in the rain.

The ferry-boat jerked itself into the slip,
And down came the shower, a pelt and a drip;
The pretty young ladies were mute with despair,
For the rain would just leave them with "nothing to wear;"
While the dainty young gentlemen stared at the skies,
With a feeling quite mildly expressed by surprise;
But 'twas fun to the baby, and once and again
He laughed his delight at the beautiful rain.

There were women with bundles, and men with cigars,
There were newsboys around with their *Heralds* and *Stars*,
There were crowds going up, there were crowds going down,
And faster the deluge poured over the town;
Umbrellas were useless at home in the hall,
And baby was fortunate, wrapped in a shawl;
He tugged at it bravely, with struggle and strain,
It hindered his seeing enough of the rain.

Oh, baby! you darling, so merry and sweet,
I followed you up the long hill of the street;
I'd nothing to fear, for *my* hat was not new,
And so I had leisure to trifle with you,
And throw you my kisses, and think what a joy
That dear little mamma must find such a boy;
An armful to carry, a weight on her shoulder,
But day by day growing a tiny bit older;
Her pride and her comfort. She didn't complain
As she bore you so cheerily home in the rain.

Once there, how she'd loosen that magical pin
That had fastened so precious a prisoner in;
And golden curls tumbled, and cap all awry,
And rumpled and crumpled, but happy and dry,
Would set you once more on the two little feet,
Restless and rosy, and cunning and fleet,
And laugh as you told her again and again,
"How nithe it wath, mamma, out dere in de wain."

SAFE-FOLDED.

Oh, it is hard when o'er the face
We scarce can see for weeping,
The little, loving baby face,
That last, still shade comes creeping;
Full hard to close the tender eyes,
And fold the hands for sleeping.

Yet, when the world our own would claim,
It doth not greatly grieve us;
We calmly see, as days go by,
Our little children leave us—
And, smiling, heed not how the swift,
Soft-footed years bereave us.

Oh, mother-hearts! I count you rich
Beyond mere earth-possessing,
Whose little babies never grow

Away from your caressing—
Safe-folded in His tender arms,
Who gives again, with blessing.

LITTLENESS.

"Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmity."

WEARILY from stair to stair
Slowly climb the little feet,
Dress awry and tangled hair,
Pouting lips as berries sweet.

"I'se so tired, don't 'ou see?
Dess I never 'll det up-stairs.
Dranpa, won't 'ou tarry me,
So as I tan say my prayers?"

Light the burden that I bore,
Nestling softly on my breast;
Arms that hugged me o'er and o'er,
Tiny form at perfect rest.

And the midget softly said,
"Ain't 'ou glad I'se small? 'Ou see,
When I have to go to bed,
'Ou tan always tarry me."

Glad I clasped the maiden close,
Warm the beating of my heart;
Love, which every parent knows,
Made the happy tear-drops start.

Ah! I thought, my weary feet,
Toiling painfully life's stair,
Often find it passing sweet
When I meet my Father there.

Weak and sinful, poor and blind,
Glad I seek His sheltering arm;
Joyful welcome there I find,
Calm security from harm.

Whispering prattle faint and low,
In His ever open ear,
Words whose meaning I scarce know,
Yet He loves to pause and hear.

Does there ever o'er Him fall
That glad thrill of holy glee—
Gladness that I am so small
He can safely carry me?

OUR BABY.

"DOD will tate tare of baby dear,"
My winsome darling said,
When in her robe of white she knelt
Beside her little bed.

Her tiny dimpled hands were clasped,
As though she were in prayer,
And, oh! methought a heavenly glow
Fell on her golden hair.

A ray, it may be, darted through
The door just pushed ajar
By angel hand, whose radiant face
Like a bright evening star

Looked down upon my darling one,
Kneeling beside her bed,
And smiled to hear the simple faith
In the sweet words she said.

"Dod will tate tare of baby dear,"
And then the eyelids drooped;
I laid her gently down to sleep,
But thought the angel stooped

To kiss good-night; for the red lips
Were parted as she slept,
And o'er her face a holy smile
In rippling dimples crept.

"God will take care of baby dear!'
Ah, yes! I knew it well,
E'en when the shadows, cold and chill,
Upon her young life fell.

And yet the mother-heart rebelled!
This puny hand, I said,
Can shield her, guide her in the path
Where God would have her led.

I could not lose my petted flower,
So beautiful, so dear,
Nor thought it was too dark and chill
For such sweet blossoms here.

"Dod will tate tare of baby dear,"
The parched lips murmured slow!
And then the eyelids drooped and closed
Forever, here below!

Oh, mourning heart, hush thy sad wail,
She's safe, now, in His love;
"God will take care of baby dear"
In His bright home above.

THE QUEEN IN HER CARRIAGE IS RIDING BY.

Oh, the queen in her carriage is passing by:
Her cheeks are like roses, her eyes like the sky;
Her wonderful teeth are white as new milk,
Her pretty blonde hair is softer than silk.

She's the loveliest monarch that ever was seen;
You ask of what country the darling is queen;
Her empire extends not to far distant parts,
She is queen of our household, the mistress of hearts.

For scepter she lifts her soft dimpled hands;
Her subjects all hasten to heed her commands;
Her smile is bewitching, and fearful her frown,
And all must obey when she puts her foot down.

May blessings descend on the bright little head,
From the time she awakes till she's safely in bed;
And now do you guess, when I speak of the queen,
'Tis only our six months baby I mean?

CRADLE SONG.

Sleep, my baby, beside the fire,
Sleep, child, sleep;
Winds are wailing, nigher and nigher,
Waves are raising, higher and higher,
Sleep, child, sleep;
While thy father, out on the sea,
Toils all night for thee and me.

Sleep, my baby, content and blest,
Sleep, child, sleep;
Whether the heart in thy mother's breast
Be light or heavy—so best! so best!
Sleep, child, sleep!
While thy father, out on the sea,
Toils all night for thee and me.

THE SUNDAY BABY.

You wonderful little Sunday child!
Half of your fortune scarce you know,
Although you have blinked and winked and smiled
Full seven and twenty days below.

"The bairn that was born on Sabbath day,"
So say the old wives over their glass—
"Is bonny and healthy, and wise and gay!"
What do you think of that, my lass?

Health and wisdom, and beauty and mirth!
And (as if that were not enough for a dower),
Because of the holy day of your birth,
Abroad you may walk in the gloaming's hour.

When we poor bodies, with backward look,
Shiver and quiver and quake with fear
Of fiend and fairy, and kelpie and spook,
Never a thought need you take, my dear—

For "Sunday's child" may go where it please,
Sunday's child shall be free from harm!
Right down through the mountain side it sees
The mines unopened where jewels swarm!

Oh, fortunate baby! Sunday lass!
The veins of gold through the rocks you'll see;
And when o'er the shining sands you pass,
You can tell where the hidden springs may be.

And never a fiend or an airy sprite
May thwart or hinder you all your days,
Whenever it chances, in mirk midnight,
The lids of your marvelous eyes you raise.

You may see, while your heart is pure and true,
The angels that visit this lower sphere,
Drop down the firmament, two and two,
Their errands of mercy to work down here.

This is the dower of a Sunday child;
What do you think of it, little brown head,
Winking and blinking your eyes so mild,
Down in the depths of your snowy bed?

THE DEAREST BABY.

SOUTH and North,
East and West,
Where is the baby
That I love best?

A little papoose
Under the trees?
A Chinese beauty
Beyond the seas?

An English child
Among the mills?

A Switzer baby
Between the hills?

A dark-eyed darling
In Southern vales?
An Iceland baby
In Northern gales?

What nonsense-talk
To speak of these!
The dearest baby
Is on my knees.

CRADLE SONG.

SLEEP, baby, sleep! for the night draweth nigh;
The daylight is fading from earth and from sky;
Through rifts in the azure the stars will soon peep,
While the breeze whispers softly, oh, sleep, baby, sleep.

Sleep, baby, sleep! mother sits by thy side,
And rocks thee so gently, her joy and her pride.
'Tis time you were shutting your bonnie blue eye,
There's nothing to fear, darling, sleep and by-bye.

May angels watch o'er thee, through dark and through light;
God's tender care keep thee, we live in His sight;
We'll trust Him, my darling, by night and by day;
The hand that has made us, will guard us alway.

Sleep, baby, sleep! now the sand-man is here;
He stole in quite softly, his purpose is clear;
Through the ivory gate into dream-land she goes—
Now rest thee, my darling, sweet be thy repose.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

BENNY'S QUESTIONS.

WHAT is the kitty good for?
My little boy Benny said.

To catch the mice in the pantry
When they nibble mamma's bread,
To sit on the rug in the sunshine,
To play with her little toes,
And if kitty is good for anything else,
It is more than mamma knows.

What is the mooly cow good for,
Mamma? I'd like to know.

To eat green grass in the pastures
Where the meadow-lilies grow,
To give us sweet golden butter,
Rich milk, and yellow cream,
And a great many more good presents
Than Benny could even dream.

What are the busy bees good for—
To sting little boys? asked he.

There is many a lesson my boy could learn
From even a busy bee.
For he works all day in the summer
Laying sweet treasures by
For the long cold days that are coming,
When roses and violets die.

What is old Rover good for?
I'm sure I can not see.

To teach my Benny how patient
Even a brute can be;
To watch papa's house at midnight,
When the lamps are all out in the street,
So, Benny, take care of good Rover,
And give him enough to eat.

What is my mamma good for?
The little rogue laughing said.

Oh, Benny, my boy, I answered,
As I pillowed his sunshiny head,
Your mamma is good for nothing
If she can not teach her child
To follow the Infant Saviour,
So loving, tender, and mild.

FOUR YEARS OLD.

OH, sun! so far up in the blue sky;
Oh, clovers! so white and so sweet;
Oh, little brook! shining like silver,
And running so fast past my feet,—

You don't know what strange thing has happened
Since sunset and star-shine last night;
Since the four-o'clocks closed their red petals
To wake up so early and bright.

Say, what will you think when I tell you
What my dear mamma whispered to me,
When she kissed me on each cheek twice over?
You don't know what a man you may see!

Sweet-clover, stand still; do not blow so:
I shall whisper way down in your ear,
I was four years old early this morning!
Would you think so, to see me, my dear?

Do you notice my pants and two pockets?
I'm so old, I must dress like a man;
I must learn to read books and write letters,
And I'll write one to you when I can.

My pretty gold butterflies flying,
Little birds, and my busy brown bee,
I shall never be too old to love you;
And I hope that you'll always love me!

SUCH FUN.

MADGE, wee woman with earnest look,
Is head and ears in a fairy book;
Rob is a rogue with hair of tow,
Last but greatest is Baby Joe.

Fastened down there
In the big arm-chair,
Stiff and angular, strong and square.
He can't get up and he can't slide out;
Nothing to do but to wriggle about,
Suck his thumbs and his rubber ring,
And wonder vaguely about his shoes
(Shiny and small such as babies use),
How they ever came on his feet.
If they're made to look at, or only to eat?
Thinks quite strongly of making a spring
In the hope of breaking the naughty thing
That holds him a prisoner snug and tight
In that tiresome chair from morning till night.

But here comes Rob with a funny face,
Baby looks up and takes heart of grace;
All his sorrows and griefs are past;
Here is something to do at last.
He gurgles and crows
And wrinkles his nose,
With one little dimple that comes and goes;
He stretches an arm with a doubled-up fist,
Soft and rosy from elbow to wrist,
For Rob has been puffing his red cheeks out
Till they look like big apples he's holding there,
Ripe and shining and smooth and fair.
Baby Joe strikes hard with his fist of pink
At the puckered-up lips, then quicker than wink
Rob jumps to his feet with a laugh and a shout,
And capers and dances and whirls about.
But the best of the play is, that when it is done
They can play it all over again,
Such fun!

TROUBLES IN HIGH LIFE.

TWO miniature mothers at play on the floor
Their wearisome cares were debating;
How Dora and Arabelle, children no more,
Were twice as much trouble as ever before,
And the causes each had her own cares to deplore,
Were, really, well worth my relating.

Said one little mother: "You really don't know
What a burden my life is with Bella!
Her stravagant habits I hope she'll outgrow.
She buys her kid gloves by the dozen, you know,
Sits for *cartes-de-visite* every fortnight or so,
And don't do a thing that I tell her!"
Those stylish young ladies (the dollies, you know),
Had complexions soft, pearly, and waxen,

With arms, neck, and forehead, as white as the snow,
Golden hair sweeping down to the waist and below,
Eyes blue as the sky, cheeks with youth's ruddy glow,—
Of a beauty pure Grecian and Saxon.

"Indeed!" said the other, "that's sad to be sure;
But, ah," with a sigh, "no one guesses
The cares and anxieties mothers endure.
For though Dora appears so sedate and demure,
She spends all the money that I can secure
On her cloaks and her bonnets and dresses."

Then followed such prattle of fashion and style,
I smiled as I listened and wondered,
And I thought, had I tried to repeat it erewhile,
How these fair little Israelites, without guile,
Would mock at my lack of their knowledge, and smile
At the way I had stumbled and blundered.

And I thought, too, when each youthful mother had conned
Her startling and touching narration,
Of the dolls of which I in my childhood was fond,
How with Dora and Arabelle they'd correspond,
And how far dolls and children to-day are beyond
Those we had in the last generation!

LITTLE MARY'S SECRET.

Oh, larks! sing out to the thrushes,
And thrushes, sing to the sky;
Sing from your nests in the bushes,
And sing wherever you fly;
For I'm sure that never another
Such secret was told unto you—
I've just got a baby brother!
And I wish that the whole world knew.

I have told the buttercups, truly,
And the clover that grows by the way;
And it pleases me each time, newly,
When I think of it during the day.
And I say to myself: "Little Mary,
You ought to be good as you can,
For the sake of the beautiful fairy
That brought you the wee little man."

I'm five years old in the summer,
And I'm getting quite large and tall;
But I thought, till I saw the newcomer,
When I looked in the glass, I was small.
And I rise in the morning quite early,
To be sure that the baby is here,
For his hair is so soft and curly,
And his hands so tiny and dear!

I stop in the midst of my pleasure—
I'm so happy I can not play—
And keep peeping in at my treasure,
To see how much he gains in a day.
But he doesn't look much like growing,
Yet I think that he will in a year,
And I wish that the days would be going,
And the time when he walks would be here!

Oh, larks! sing out to the thrushes,
And thrushes, sing as you soar;
For I think, when another spring blushes,
I can tell you a great deal more:
I shall look from one to the other,
And say: "Guess who I'm bringing to you?"
And you'll look—and see—he's my brother!
And you'll sing, "Little Mary was true."

LITTLE BOY BLUE.

UNDER the hay-stack, little Boy Blue
Sleeps with his head on his arm,
While voices of men and voices of maids
Are calling him over the farm.

Sheep in the meadows are running wild,
Where poisonous herbage grows,
Leaving white tufts of downy fleece
On the thorns of the sweet wild-rose.

Out in the fields where the silken corn
Its plumed head nods and bows,
Where golden pumpkins ripen below,
Trample the white-faced cows.

But no loud blast on the shining horn
Calls back the straying sheep,
And the cows may wander in hay or corn
While their keeper lies asleep.

His roguish eyes are tightly shut,
His dimples are all at rest;
The chubby hand, tucked under his head,
By one rosy cheek is pressed.

Waken him? No. Let down the bars
And gather the truant sheep,
Open the barnyard and drive in the cows,
But let the little boy sleep.

For year after year we can shear the fleece,
And corn can always be sown;
But the sleep that visits little Boy Blue
Will not come when the years have flown.

TOO LITTLE, EH!

Two little girls are better than one,
Two little boys can double the fun,
Two little birds can make a fine nest,
Two little arms can love mother best,
Two little ponies must go to a span,
Two little pockets has my little man,
Two little eyes to open and close,
Two little ears and one little nose,
Two little elbows, dimpled and sweet,
Two little shoes on two little feet,
Two little lips and one little chin,
Two little cheeks with a rose set in,
Two little shoulders chubby and strong,
Two little legs running all day long,
Two little prayers does my darling say,
Twice does he kneel by my side each day,
Two little folded hands, soft and brown,
Two little eyelids cast meekly down,
And two little angels guard him in bed,
One at the foot and one at the head.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL.

BEFORE SCHOOL.

"QUARTER to nine!
Boys and girls, do you hear?"
"One more buckwheat, then—
Be quick, mother dear,
Where is my luncheon-box?"—
"Under the shelf,
Just in the place
You left it yourself!"
"I can't say my table!"—
"Oh, find me my cap!"
"One kiss for mamma,
And sweet Sis in her lap."
"Be good, dear!"—"I'll try."—
"9 times 9's 81."
"Take your mittens!"—"All right."—
"Hurry up, Bill; let's run."
With a slam of the door
They are off, girls and boys,
And the mother draws breath
In the lull of their noise.

AFTER SCHOOL.

"Don't wake up the baby!
Come gently, my dear!"
"Oh, mother, I've torn my
New dress, just look here!

I'm sorry, I only was
Climbing the wall."
"Oh, mother, my map
Was the nicest of all!"
"And Nelly, in spelling,
Went up to the head!"
"Oh, say! can I go out
On the hill with my sled?"
"I've got such a toothache."—
"The teacher's unfair!"
"Is dinner most ready?
I'm just like a bear!"
Be patient, worn mother,
They're growing up fast,
These nursery whirlwinds,
Not long do they last;
A still, lonely house would be
Far worse than noise;
Rejoice and be glad in
Your brave girls and boys!

BED-TIME.

I.

THE children are going to bed
In nurseries shaded and clean,
And many a bright and curly head
Is nestling the white sheets between.

Little faces all washed white as snow,
Are dewy with kisses to-night,
And young lips are murmuring low
Sweet prayers—words from consciences white.

Tiny dresses and jackets and shoes
Lie folded away till the morn,
Like the chrysalis, no more of use
To the gayly-striped insect new-born.

The angel of sleep hovers near,
And curtains the room with his wings;
That incense to angels is dear
Which from the nursery altars upsprings.

Little eyelids quite tired with play,
Are drooping and closing like flowers,
And restless young forms laid away,
To sleep through the long midnight hours.

In cottage and castle and hall,
In valley, on prairie, or hill,
The calm hush of evening doth fall,
And life hath grown suddenly still.

At sunset a blessing comes down,
And peace upon all things is shed,
For in city and village and town
The children are going to bed.

II.

The children are going to bed,
Such bed as their lives ever know,
In alley and attic and shed,
And cellar-ways fetid and low,
In homes where wrangle and din
Turn night into hideous noon,
Where the voice of shame, sorrow, and sin
Will break their light slumbers too soon.

All tumbled and dirty they lie,
No kiss on the heavy young brow,
A tear scarcely dried in the eye,
The flush of a blow ling'ring now.
They sleep upon pavement or floor,
With never a low word of prayer,
Or gasp at the window or door
For a breath of the life-giving air.

Far up in the tenement high
They sob at the falling of day,
And angels bend down from the sky
To hear what the poor children say.
It may be that even in heaven
Some bright tears of pity are shed,
And sins of the day all forgiven
When the children are going to bed.

III.

"The children are going to bed!"
Hushed voices speak gently the word:
All muffled the mother's light tread,
No merry "Good-evening" is heard,

No breath stirs the ringlets of gold,
No dimple the passionless cheek,
No tossing limbs ruffle a fold
Laid over the hands folded meek.

Oh! quiet the cradle, though small,
Where the children are laid to their rest;
There is room and to spare for them all,
In Earth's warm and welcoming breast.
What matter if castle or cot
Once held the fair image of snow?
All alike are they now in their lot,
As they nestle the flowers below.

Then cover them up from our sight,
Spread the freshest green turf o'er their head,
Bid them one more caressing "good-night,"
The children are going to bed.
The children are folded in dreams,
Bright angels have sung them to sleep,
And stars with their great solemn beams,
Loving watch o'er their tired forms keep.

No waking to sorrow or gloom,
No hunger, no shame, and no sin,
Oh! faithful and loving the tomb
That safe from life's ills shuts them in.
The sweet name of Jesus our Lord
Once more o'er their pillows be said,
And praise, that, secure in His Word,
The children are going to bed.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON.

SHE turns her great grave eyes toward mine,
While I stroke her soft hair's gold;
We watch the moon through the window shine;
She is only six years old.

"Is it true," she asks, with her guileless mien,
And her voice in tender tune,
"That nobody ever yet has seen
The other side of the moon?"

I smile at her question, answering "Yes;"
And then, by a strange thought stirred,
I murmur, half in forgetfulness
That she listens to every word:
"There are treasures on earth so rich and fair
That they can not stay with us here,
And the other side of the moon is where
They go when they disappear!

"There are hopes that the spirit hardly names,
And songs that it mutely sings;
There are good resolves, and exalted aims;
There are longings for nobler things;
There are sounds and visions that haunt our lot,
Ere they vanish, or seem to die,
And the other side of the moon (why not?)
Is the far bourne where they fly!

"We could guess how that realm were passing sweet,
And of strangely precious worth,
If its distant reaches enshrined complete
The incompleteness of earth!
If there we could find, like a living dream,
What here we but mourn and miss,
Oh, the other side of the moon must beam
With a glory unknown in this!"

"Are you talking of Heaven?" she whispers now,
While she nestles against my knees.
And I say, as I kiss her white wide brow,
"You may call it so, if you please

For whatever that wondrous land may be,
Should we journey there, late or soon,
Perhaps we may look down from Heaven and see—
The other side of the moon!"

GOOD-NIGHT.

GOOD-NIGHT! the sun is setting,
"Good-night!" the robins sing,
And blue-eyed dolls and blue-eyed girls
Should soon be following.
Come! lay the Lady Geraldine
Among the pillows white;
'Tis time the little mother kissed
Her sleepy doll good-night.

And, Willie, put the cart away,
And drive into the shed
The pony and the mooly cow;
'Tis time to go to bed.
For, listen! in the lilac tree
The robin does not sing;
"Good-night!" he sang, and tucked his head
Beneath his weary wing.

Soon all the world will go to rest,
And all the sky grow dim;
God "giveth His beloved sleep,"
So we may trust in Him.
The Lord is in the shadow,
And the Lord is in the light,
To guard His little ones from harm;
Good-night, dear hearts, good-night!

COUNTRY CHILDREN

LITTLE fresh violets,
Born in the wildwood;
Sweetly illustrating
Innocent childhood:
Shy as the antelope—
Brown as a berry—
Free as the mountain air,
Romping and merry.

Blue eyes and hazel eyes
Peep from the hedges,
Shaded by sun-bonnets,
Frayed at the edges!

Up in the apple trees,
Careless of danger,
Manhood in embryo
Stares at the stranger.

Out in the hilly patch,
Seeking the berries—
Under the orchard trees,
Feasting on cherries—
Trampling the clover blooms,
Down 'mong the grasses,
No voice to hinder them,
Dear lads and lasses!

No grim propriety—
No interdiction;
Free as the birdlings
From city restriction!
Coining the purest blood,
Strength'ning each muscle,
Donning health armor
'Gainst life's coming bustle.

Dear little innocents!
Born in the wildwood;
Oh, that all little ones
Had such a childhood!
Blue skies spread over them,
Earth's green beneath them,
No sweeter heritage
Could we bequeathe them.

THE LITTLE CAVALIER.

HE walks beside his mother,
And looks up in her face;
He wears a glow of boyish pride
With such a royal grace!
He proudly waits upon her;
Would shield her without fear—
The boy who loves his mother well,
Her little cavalier.

To see no tears of sorrow
Upon her loving cheek,
To gain her sweet, approving smile,
To hear her softly speak—
Ah! what in all this wide world
Could be to him so dear?—
The boy who loves his mother well,
Her little cavalier.

Look for him in the future
Among the good, the true:
All blessings on the upward way
His little feet pursue.
Of robed and crowned and sceptered kings
He stands the royal peer—
The boy who loves his mother well,
Her little cavalier.

"THAT LITTLE HAT."

I FIND it in the garden path,
Its little crown half full
Of white flowers; where's the rogue
Who dared my roses pull?
I find it on the roadside there,
The flowers tossed away,
And in the crown, packed carefully,
A load of stones and clay.

I find it in the daisied field,
Or hidden in the clover,
Inspected by the wandering bees,
And crawled by insects over.
I find it on the old barn floor,
Or in the manger resting,
Or swinging from the beams above,
Where cooing doves are nesting.

I find it 'neath my busy feet
Upon the kitchen floor,
Or lying midway up the stairs,
Or by my chamber door.
I find it in, I find it out,
'Neath table, lounge, or chair,
The little shabby brimless thing,
I find it everywhere

But on the curly, golden pate
For which alone 'twas meant,
That little restless, sunny head,
On mischief always bent.
Oh! baby boy, this problem solve,
And tell me, darling, whether
Your roguish pate and this old hat
Were *ever* seen together?

MY BOY.

A LITTLE roll of flannel fine;
A thrill in mother's heart—"'tis mine;"
A little head of golden hair;
A lifted eye to heaven in prayer;

A smile that ripples to a laugh;
A tear with grief in its behalf;
A pushing of a slender chair;
A climbing of the oaken stair;

A stride o'er everything at hand;
A horse at Santa Claus' command;
A little cart all painted red;
A train of cars at full steam sped;

A pair of "pants" that reach the knee;
A strut like midshipman from sea;
A pair of boots with tops of red;
A knife, a ball, a gallant sled;

A pocket full of everything;
A "shooter," skates, and yards of string;
A voting fraction's "such a bore;"
A holiday rejoicing o'er;

A stretching down the pantaloon;
A swim—a wrestling match at noon;
A little Latin now, and Greek;
A letter home just once a week;

A roaming through collegiate halls;
A summer evening spent in calls;
A rapture o'er a sunny face;
A bow, a ring, some bridal lace;

A kneeling at the chancel rail;
A trembling bride, a bridegroom pale;
A leap into the world's wide sea;
My boy was gone—ah me! ah me!

THREE OPINIONS.

THE great Thanksgiving dinner
Was over—scant room to doubt;
For a trio of little faces,
Jolly and fat, peeped out.
Fat quite nigh to bursting,
Jolly, good reason why—
Up to their eyes in turkey,
Brimful of pumpkin pie.

Three so lucky youngsters
Well might afford to pause,
To pity the turkey—martyrs
Roasted in such a cause.

And Susie had raised the question—
Jollily late, say I—
Whether in this day's honor
'Twere just the turk should die.

She shook her brown curls doubtful.
"I ain't quite sure," she said,
"If even I'd like for honor
To be a turkey dead.
Ours strutted about so proudly,
Must 've thought he'd be spared.
It was sort of mean to kill him;
Bob, do you think he cared?"

Came a peal of puzzled laughter,
With the answer, from Bob's lips:
"Why, what was a turkey made for
But just for human nips?
I'm sure he'd 've felt real slighted
Not to be killed to-day,
For every well-trained turkey
Is proud to die this way."

Spoke Beth, the household baby—
Beth, nigh bursting, too;
"I think 'ou'th jutht the queeretht,
Funnietht 'ittle Thue.
I knowth the vewy weathon,
I th' pothed 'ou undwerthtood:
If it wathn't wight to kill him
He wouldn't tathte tho dood."

Quite charming the baby's logic;
Wee Susan seemed convinced,
And crumpled up her conscience
So tight it never winced.
Surely, with her, quite easy
To see the reason why—
Up to her eyes in turkey,
Brimful of pumpkin pie.

DAISY'S NEW PLAY.

Our little Daisy is rosy and sweet,
Neat as a pin from her head to her feet;
Her long, waving ringlets are yellow as gold,
And her bonny brown eyes they are bright to behold.

All the day through it makes one rejoice
To hear the soft tones of her sweet, laughing voice;
Summer or winter, sunshine or rain,
No one hears Daisy fret and complain.

Up stairs and down, nimble with fun,
Two little slippered feet scamper and run,
While two little hands as nimble as they
Make themselves busy with work and with play.

Every one's errands they're ready to do—
Find mamma's needle; button her shoe;
Set papa's slippers down by the fire;
Build baby's block-house two stories higher.

Hold the long skein for grandmother's knitting;
Pick up the ball that's apt to go flitting;
Run for the letters when the bell rings;
Oh, she's the Daisy for all sorts of things!

Once when it rained, and baby was cross,
And mother and nurse were quite at a loss—
At their wit's end, in fact, I may say—
Daisy invented a new sort of play.

She put a mop-cap on her curly young head,
Grandmother's cap, if the truth must be said,
And next thing she borrowed, don't you suppose,
Grandmother's specs to stick on her nose!

Somebody lent her an old parasol,
So she was so dressed to make us a call;

And you should have seen the baby's delight
When little grandmother danced into sight.

All in a minute the cross fit was over,
And he was as gay as a bee in the clover,
Laughing and crowing in such a wild frolic,
Nurse was afraid it would give him the colic.

Our little Daisy, dainty and fair,
From her plump little toes to her yellow gold hair,
Gentle and good as she's bonny and clever,
Every one prays, Bless her forever!

Strangers that meet her out in the street,
Whisper, with kisses, Isn't she sweet?
Sweet as a violet, fresh as a rose,
And how much we love her nobody knows!

WHERE'S MY BABY?

WHERE'S my baby? Where's my baby?
But a little while ago,
In my arms I held one fondly,
And a robe of lengthened flow
Covered little knees so dimpled,
And each pink and chubby toe.

Where's my baby? I remember
Now about the shoes so red,
Peeping from his shortened dresses,
And the bright curls on his head;
Of the little teeth so pearly,
And the first sweet words he said.

Where's my baby? Ask that urchin,
Let me hear what he will say;
"Where's your baby, ma?" he questioned,
With a roguish look and way;
"Guess he's grown to be a boy, now,
Big enough to work and play."

Where's my baby? Where's my baby?
Ah! the years fly on apace!
Yesterday I held and kissed it,
In its loveliness and grace;
But to-morrow sturdy manhood
Takes the little baby's place.

THE LITTLE BOY'S LAMENT.

OH, why must I always be washed so clean
And scrubbed and drenched for Sunday,
When you know very well, for you've always seen,
That I'm dirty again on Monday?

My eyes are filled with the lathery soap,
Which adown my ears is dripping;
And my smarting eyes I can scarcely ope,
And my lips the suds are sipping.

It's down my neck and up my nose,
And to choke me you seem to be trying;
That I'll shut my mouth you need not suppose,
For how can I keep from crying?

You rub as hard as ever you can,
And your hands are hard to my sorrow;
No woman shall wash me when I'm a man,
And I wish I was one to-morrow.

LITTLE BOOTS.

NOT those I sadly laid away,
With little stockings soft and gay,
That sunless, heart-sick, saddest day,
I passed beneath the rod;
I wipe from them the gathering mold,
I wonder at their growing old,
Then think how long the streets of gold
My little one has trod!

To-day a little larger pair
Are traversing the hall and stair,
Or somersaulting in the air,
Are never, never still:
Down at the heel! Out at the toes!
Mud-covered! every mother knows
How "in-and-out" her dear boy goes,
Oft chide him as she will.

But life and strength and glowing health,
Come through those little boots by stealth,
And willing errands, love's sweet wealth
At bidding bring us joy.
Bear with the little boots, I pray;
Soon into life they'll walk away,
And, sitting lone, your heart will say,
Where is my little boy?

A WEE PHILOSOPHER.

As down the path, one Sabbath-morn,
I walked at rapid rate,
There stepped beside me hurriedly,
Lest she, too, should be late,
From tip to toe as sweet a maid
As careful mother e'er arrayed
For church, on Sunday morning.

A little space she trotted on
Demurely at my side—
A proper maid for Sabbath-morn—
When suddenly she spied
A luscious tempter in her path:
I heard a jolly crow and laugh;
"Just ripe for Sunday morning!"

A clump of whortleberries, green
Save just a few in sight,
Which, smarter than their neighbors, had
Turned black within the night:
These bobbed their heads, as if to say,
"We'll wager that you've come this way
To pick us, Sunday morning!"

Too tempting was the prospect for
So wee a maid to slight;
Quick plunged she 'mid the vines, then rose
Uproarious with delight —
So merry that she heeded not,
So happy that she quite forgot
That it was Sunday morning.

A-sudden paused she, and her voice
Took quite a sober trill;
A penitent in word at least,
She softly spoke—though still
She clutched the berry-branches tight,
"I don't suppose it was just right
To pick them Sunday morning!"

So very loth was she to yield
The luscious prize at stake,
This little maid was tempted sore
A compromise to make;
And curious, silent listener, I,
Next moment heard th' exultant cry:
"I'll eat them Monday morning!

"Perhaps that won't so wicked be"—
And carefully she stowed
Her booty in a hiding-place,
Then hurried down the road,
From tip to toe as sweet a maid
As ruthless tempter e'er waylaid
Bound church-ward Sunday morning!

That she could keep her compromise
I doubted very much;
Yet, truly, never all that day
Did she the berries touch.
But, bright and early, once again
I saw her tripping down the lane,
To eat them, Monday morning.

OUR CHARLIE.

THERE'S a hurry of half-clipped words
Flung out of the baby mouth;
A kiss like the rustle of birds,
And a breath like the wind from the south.

There are chubby arms clasping me tight
In the warmth of a childish caress,
There are questioning glances bright
And a little hand pulling my dress.

Then, a leap out of babyhood's door,
A cheerily ringing voice,
A bounding step on the floor,
A boyish bustle and noise;
Lo, the inches are growing tall
On the head with its bright curls shorn!
There's a slate and a book and a ball,
Cut fingers, and looks forlorn.

A lengthening down of his clothes,
A fumbling after his wits,
A freckle or two on his nose,
A collar that never fits,
A voice that is cracked and hoarse,
A trouble with hands and feet,
A laugh grown a trifle coarse,
And a muckle bit o' conceit.

A voice that is merry and strong,
The curl of a dark moustache,
The ring of a college song,
A tale of adventures rash;
A sign on an office door,
A story the poets sing,
A few whispered words said o'er,
A sigh and a proffered ring;

An army marching away,
The touch of a parting hand,
The dawn of a battle day,
A grave in a southern land;
A few swift tears to fall,
A uniform faded and torn,
A picture to hang on the wall,
A presence forever gone!

LETTING THE OLD CAT DIE.

NOT long ago I wandered near
A playground in the wood,
And there heard words from a youngster's lips
That I never quite understood.

"Now, let the old cat die," he laughed;
I saw him give a push,
Then gravely scamper away as he spied
My face peep over the bush.

But what he pushed, or where he went,
I could not well make out,
On account of the thicket of bending boughs
That bordered the place about.

"The little villain has stoned a cat,
Or hung it upon a limb,
And left it to die all alone," I said,
"But I'll play the mischief with him."

I forced my way between the boughs,
The poor old cat to seek,
And what did I find but a swinging child,
With her bright hair brushing her cheek.

Her bright hair floated to and fro,
Her little red dress flashed by,
But the loveliest thing of all, I thought,
Was the gleam of her laughing eye.

Swinging and swaying back and forth,
With the rosy light in her face,
She seemed like a bird and a flower in one,
And the forest her native place.

"Steady! I'll send you up, my child,"
But she stopped me with a cry:
"Go 'way! go 'way! don't touch me, please,
I'm letting the old cat die!"

"You letting him die!" I cried, aghast,
"Why, where's the cat, my dear?"
And lo! the laughter that filled the woods
Was the thing for the birds to hear.

"Why, don't you know," said the little maid,
The flitting, beautiful elf,
"That we call it 'letting the old cat die,'
When the swing stops all of itself?"

Then swinging and swinging, and looking back,
With the merriest look in her eye,
She bade me "Good-day," and I left her alone,
A-letting the old cat die.

WHAT'S A BOY LIKE?

LIKE a wasp, like a sprite,
Like a goose, like an eel,
Like a top, like a kite,
Like an owl, like a wheel,
Like the wind, like a snail,
Like a knife, like a crow,
Like a thorn, like a flail,
Like a hawk, like a doe.

Like the sea, like a weed,
Like a watch, like the sun,
Like a cloud, like a seed,
Like a book, like a gun,
Like a smile, like a tree,
Like a lamb, like the moon,
Like a bud, like a bee,
Like a burr, like a tune.

Like a colt, like a whip,
Like a mouse, like a mill,
Like a bell, like a ship,
Like a jay, like a rill,
Like a shower, like a cat,
Like a frog, like a toy,
Like a ball, like a bat,
Most of all—like a boy.

PAYING HER WAY.

WHAT has my darling been doing to-day,
To pay for her washing and mending?
How can she manage to keep out of debt
For so much caressing and tending?

How can I wait till the years shall have flown,
And the hands have grown larger and stronger?
Who will be able the interest to pay
If the debt runs many years longer?

Dear little feet! How they fly to my side!
White arms my neck are caressing.
Sweetest of kisses are laid on my cheek,
Fair head my shoulder is pressing.
Nothing at all from my darling is due,
From evil may angels defend her—
The debt is discharged as fast as 'tis made,
For love is a legal tender!

SWINGING ON A BIRCH TREE.

SWINGING on a birch tree
To a sleepy tune,
Hummed by all the breezes
In the month of June!
Little leaves a-flutter
Sound like dancing drops
Of a brook on pebbles—
Song that never stops.

Up and down we see-saw;
Up into the sky;
How it opens on us,
Like a wide blue eye!
You and I are sailors
Rocking on a mast;
And the world's our vessel:
Ho! she sails so fast!

Blue, blue sea around us;
Not a ship in sight;
They will hang out lanterns
When they pass to-night.
We with ours will follow
Through the midnight deep;
Not a thought of danger,
Though the crew's asleep.

Oh, how still the air is!
There an oriole flew;
What a jolly whistle!
He's a sailor, too.

Yonder is his hammock
In the elm-top high:
One more ballad, messmate!
Sing it as you fly!

Up and down we see-saw:
Down into the grass,
Scented fern and rose-buds,
All a woven mass:
That's the sort of carpet
Fitted for our feet;
Tapestry nor velvet
Is so rich and neat.

Swinging on a birch tree!
This is summer joy,
Fun for all vacation—
Don't you think so, boy?
Up and down to see-saw,
Merry and at ease,
Careless as a brook is,
Idle as the breeze.

ONLY A BOY.

ONLY a boy, with his noise and fun,
The veriest mystery under the sun;
As brimful of mischief and wit and glee
As ever a human frame can be,
And as hard to manage as—ah! ah me!
'Tis hard to tell;
Yet we love him well.

Only a boy, with his fearful tread,
Who can not be driven, but must be led;
Who troubles the neighbors' dogs and cats,
And tears more clothes, and spoils more hats,
Loses more tops and kites and bats,
Than would stock a store
For a year or more.

Only a boy, with his wild, strange ways;
With his idle hours on busy days;
With his queer remarks and odd replies,
Sometimes foolish, and sometimes wise;
Often brilliant, for one of his size,
As a meteor hurled
From the pleasant world.

Only a boy, who will be a man,
If nature goes on with her first great plan;
If fire or water, or some fatal snare,
Conspire not to rob us of this our heir,
Our blessing, our trouble, our rest, our care,
Our torment, our joy—
"Only a boy."

CHESTNUTS.

DOWN in the orchard, all the day,
The apples ripened and dropped away;
Tawny, and yellow, and red they fell,
Filling the air with a spicy smell.

There were purple grapes on the alders low,
But the jays had gathered them long ago:
And the merry children had plundered well,
Hedge, and thicket, and hazel dell.

But the sturdy chestnuts over the hill
Guarded their prickly caskets still,
And laughed in scorn at the wind and rain,
Beating their burly limbs in vain.

"Hush!" said the frost. "If you'll hold your breath
Till hill and valley are still as death
I will whisper a spell that shall open wide
The caskets green where the treasures hide."

The rain sank down and the wind was still,
And the world was wrapped in the moonlight chill;

And a faint white mist, like a ghost, was seen
Creeping over the valley green.

Over the roofs of the sleeping town,
Over the hillsides, bare and brown;
Field, and meadow, and wood were crossed
By the shining trail of the silver frost.

Close at the door of each guarded cell
He breathed the words of his wonderful spell,
And the bristling lances turned aside
And every portal flew open wide.

Up sprang the wind with a loud "Ho! ho!"
And scattered the treasures to and fro:
And the children shouted, "Come away!
There is sport in the chestnut woods to-day."

RUNNING AWAY FROM MAMMA.

RUNNING away from mamma,
Bareheaded up the street,
Kicking the dust into yellow smoke
With little roguish feet,
Tossing it over his clean white dress
Into his stocking heels,
Checking the little wooden horse
That trundles along on wheels.

Dreaming away with mild blue eyes,
And speculating why
God don't give him the golden ball
That drops in the quivering sky—
What is the use of that pretty pink cloud
Sailing away on high,
If he didn't have a ride on it?
And it's no use to try!

If that woman grew with glasses on,
If this house is papa's;
Why that nice red cow won't talk to him,
Leaning across the bars.

Into the neighbors' gates and doors,
Under their cherry trees,
Into mischief and out again
Wherever he may please.

Wandering at last to the old church steps
Little horse and all,
Climbing up laboriously—
(Too bad if he should fall!)
Pushing in with dimpled hands
The great doors strong and tall,
Letting the warm sweet summer light
Glide down the shadowed wall.

Standing still in the solemn hush
Of the chancel, nave, and dome,
Thinking it is prettier
Than the sitting-room at home.
Not a bit afraid—ah! no, indeed,
Of the shadows vast and dim,
Quite at home and sure it was made
All on purpose for him.

The old, old story comes up to me,
Written so long ago,
About the heavenly temple
Where you and I must go.
The beautiful waiting temple
That has no room for sin—
Something about a little child
And the way of entering in.

STORMY-DAY PARTY.

BABY and I are invited
To a fine party, they say,
I'm sure we will be delighted
To go on this stormy day.
"Give my love—I'll come; baby, too,
Joins me with a hearty, 'a-goo.'"

"'Tis not very far—just walk out here,"
Said dancing little Freddy,
"Have this easy-chair, mamma dear,
The party is quite ready.
Mrs. Hippo, mamma; Miss Rose, too,"
I bowed, and baby said, "a-goo."

Freddy did so very funny look,
In papa's coat and high hat—
Grace, as Mrs. Hippo and chief cook,
In Bridget's new calico, sat.
We talked and chatted as people do,
Baby repeating his sweet "a-goo."

Tea was served on dainty dishes,
Nuts, pop-corn, and bits of cake,
Peppermints and candy fishes,
Were spread for us to partake.
We sipped and ate, enjoyed it, too,
And baby laughed and said, "a-goo."

A step was heard out in the hall,
Stamping the snow from the feet,
"Papa's come," we shouted, and all
Invited him to the treat.
He gave us kisses, not a few,
But best of all was baby's "a-goo."

"I'm so glad," the dear papa said,
"While storming so wild without,
We have sunshine within. Fred,
Ask mamma to play; no doubt
We can join in the singing, too,
And baby help with his "a-goo."

GOOD-NIGHT AND GOOD-MORNING.

A FAIR little girl
Sat under a tree,
Sewing as long as
Her eyes could see;
She smoothed her work,
And folded it right,
And said, "Dear work,
Good-night, good-night."

Such a number of rooks
Went over her head,
Crying, "Caw, caw,"
On their way to bed.
She said, as she watched
Their curious flight,
"Little black things,
Good-night, good-night."

The horses neighed,
And the oxen lowed,
And the sheep's "bleat, bleat,"
Came over the road;
All seeming to say,
With a quiet delight,
"Good little girl,
Good-night, good-night."

She did not say
To the sun, "Good-night,"
Though she saw him there,
Like a ball of light;
For she knew he had
God's time to keep
All over the world,
And never could sleep.

The tall, pink fox-glove
Bowed his head:
The violets curtsied
And went to bed;
And good little Lucy
Tied up her hair,
And said, on her knees,
Her favorite prayer.

And while on her pillow
She softly lay,
She heard nothing more
Till again it was day.
And all things said
To the beautiful sun,
"Good-morning, good-morning;
Our work has begun."

MICE.

THEY break the kitchen windows
And overturn the chairs;
They cut the doors and tables—
Much wicked work is theirs.
Your watch they often handle,
And sometimes let it fall;
Which fact is quite surprising
When told of rodents small.

They hide your books and papers,
Unlock the doors and gates;
They revel in the pantry
And rattle down the plates.

They fill your boots with pebbles,
And, to your great dismay,
A garret full of pussies
Can't keep the knaves away.

But mice don't slam the shutters,
And sail your hats for boats.
And give away to beggars
Your pantaloons and coats.
At last, you muse on Darwin,
And, much to your annoy,
You find those mice developed
Into that youngest boy.

SHADOWS ON THE WALL.

LITTLE Bessie wakes at midnight,
And upon the nursery wall,
Sees she by the flickering firelight
Shadows dancing grim and tall.

Now they rise and now they beckon,
Nearer still they seem to come,
Bessie's blue eyes gaze wide open,
And her lips are stricken dumb.

Bessie thinks they are "the witches,"
"Mary said they'd take away
All the naughty little children,
And I've not been good to-day.

"Once I did not mind my mother,
And I broke the china cup,"
So the little tender conscience
All the past day's sins sums up.

Still the dancing shadows waken
Childhood's grief and childhood's fear,
And there sink into the pillow
Many a sob and many a tear;

Till the mother, sleeping lightly,
Just within the open door,
Wakes and listens for a moment;
Hastens barefoot o'er the floor;

Folds the little weeping maiden
Close within her loving arms;
And upon that tender bosom
Bessie sobs out her alarms.

Then the mother, softly smiling,
Whispers, "All your witches tall,
Oh, my foolish little Bessie,
Are but shadows on the wall!

"See, the tall ones are the andirons;
That the wardrobe; this the chair;
And the shawl upon the sofa
Makes the face with flowing hair.

"Has my darling then forgotten,
When she said her evening prayer,
How she prayed that God's good angels
Still might have her in their care?

"Sure she knows that the Good Shepherd
Guards His flock by day and night,
And the lambs are folded safely,
In the dark as in the light."

Soon upon her mother's bosom
Little Bessie falls asleep,
Murmuring, as she clings the closer,
"Pray the Lord my soul to keep."

And the mother, softly kissing
The wet eyelids and the hair,
Tossed back from the snowy forehead,
Clasps her close in voiceless prayer.

That the Love which gave her darling
Still may keep till dawns the day
When earth's haunting fears are over,
And the shadows flee away.

CASTLES IN THE FIRE.

SITTING by the fire-light,
In the twilight gray,
Building airy castles,
Bessie, Jack, and May,
Curly brown and golden locks,
Nestled close together,
Heeding not the wailing winds
Of November weather.

Seeing in the wood-fire
Many a vision rare;
Tracing in their fancies,
The future gay and fair.

Well it is each dreamer
Sees not down the years
All his cares and sorrows,
All his toils and tears.

"Look! I see a war-horse,
Prancing, inky black.
Don't you see me charging
Fiercely on his back?
Now, again, I'm bowing
To the loud 'Hurrah!'
I've come back victorious—
A hero from the war."

'See the haughty lady,
Turning cold away
From the throng of suitors,
Who all vainly pray.
Oh, she will not listen,
Noble though they be,
She's waiting for her sailor,
Sailing o'er the sea."

Now it is sweet May's turn,
Peering in the blaze,
What can see dear blue eyes,
Of the future days?
"I can see a little urn,
'Neath a willow-tree,
In a churchyard, all alone,
That I think's for me."

Boyish peals of laughter,
Ring out clear and free,
"Yes, I see the little urn,
It's to make the tea.
I'll come back from battle,
Bessie from the sea,
Dearest May shall sit at home,
And brew us cups of tea."

LITTLE MISS MEDDLESOME.

LITTLE Miss Meddlesome, scattering crumbs,
Into the library noisily comes—
Twirls off her apron, tilts open some books,
And into a work-basket rummaging, looks.

Out go the spools spinning over the floor,
Beeswax and needle-case stepped out before;
She tosses the tape-rule and plays with the floss,
And says to herself, "Now won't mamma be cross!"

Little Miss Meddlesome climbs to the shelf,
Since no one is looking, and, mischievous elf,
Pulls down the fine vases, the cuckoo clock stops,
And sprinkles the carpet with damaging drops.

She turns over the ottoman, frightens the bird,
And sees that the chairs in a medley are stirred;
Then creeps on the sofa, and, all in a heap,
Drops out of her frolicsome mischief asleep.

But here comes the nurse, who is shaking her head,
And frowns at the Mischief asleep on her bed;
But let's hope when Miss Meddlesome's slumber is o'er
She may wake from good dreams and do mischief no more.

PATCHWORK.

LITTLE Miss Margery sits and sews;
Painfully creaking her needle goes,
As the moist little fingers push it through.
Such a long stint she has got to do!
"What is the good," she says with a sigh,
"Of making more quilts to just lay by?

"Up in the press lies row on row;
Who are they for? I should like to know.

'You'll be glad some day,' says Aunt Pauline,
'That you made so many.' What can she mean?
Pretty white spreads, I think, look best;
And, anyway, little girls want some rest."

The small brass thimble gleefully rolled
(Margery likes to play 'tis gold),
Scissors and spool with a clatter fell;
Solemn old clock, now don't you tell!
Over the sill see Margery lean,
Heedless of patchwork and Aunt Pauline.

Clover-heads with their horns of honey,
Daisies with gold and silver money,
Strings of strawberries yet to be,
Yellow butterflies, gay and free,
Sun and wind, and a chance to play,—
All these scarcely a rod away.

She knows she could find a four-leafed clover
Before she had hunted the field half over;
And, oh! by the way that sparrow flew,
She must have a nest there, certain true!
Only a thin white wall between!—
When suddenly in walked Aunt Pauline.

The high-backed chairs grew straighter still,
The clock began to tick with a will,
Even the foolish half-moon face
Checked itself in a broad grimace,
While a vagrant bee who was buzzing through
Out of the window quickly flew.

Guilty Margery, quite aghast,
Straightens up and sews very fast.
But all in vain, however she tries,
To cheat for a moment those keen eyes
Under their spectacles looking through
Body and soul—and patchwork, too.

"What is the matter," she asks, "to-day?
You want to go out in the field and play?
If I were so silly I wouldn't have told—
A great, big girl nearly twelve years old.
Let me see your work. Well, I do declare,
'Twould disgrace a baby, Margery Ware!

"It must all come out. Here, take this pin;
Sit beside me, while you begin.
Remember, you must not leave your seat
Until it is done all true and neat.
You'll be thankful yet that you learned to sew,"
With a glance at Margery's face of woe.

"When I was a girl," says Aunt Pauline,
"An idle minute was seldom seen;
You've no idea of the pains we'd take,
Our beautiful patchwork squares to make.
For prints were precious, and thread was high,
And little enough could our parents buy.

"You could sew if you only tried;
What in the world do you see outside?
Grass wants cutting; the corn looks dry;
Signs of rain, I think, in the sky.
Carefully, child, don't hurry so.
Set your stitches exact and slow."

Margery swings her restless feet,
Clover blossoms do smell so sweet;

Smooth little finger-tips grow rough,
Won't she ever have done enough?
Well, she must bear it while she's small;
Grown-up folks needn't sew at all.

LITTLE TODDIE.

Is it bright with summer gladness,
Toddie dear;
Is there nowhere any sadness,
Toddie dear,
In that land of pleasant mountains,
Crystal rivers, silver fountains,
In that home to which you hastened
From the home by sorrow chastened,
Joyless here?

Do the seraph-bands surround you,
Toddie boy?
Do the angels gather round you,
Toddie boy?
Do they keep your heart from grieving
For the mother you are leaving,
For the mother who is groaning
With a broken-hearted moaning
For her boy?

Yes, we know that love upholds you,
Toddie dear;
That a wondrous love enfolds you,
Toddie dear,
With an infinite sweet pity.
In that shining golden city
Little ones are crowned with blessing,
All the Saviour's care possessing,
There as here.

But we loved you very dearly,
Toddie boy;
And we held you very nearly,
Toddie boy!
Many, many tender mothers,
Little sisters, little brothers,
Would be sorely grieved in spirit,
But they know that you inherit
Peace and joy.

BLUE AND GRAY.

"Oh, mother, what do they mean by blue?
And what do they mean by gray?"
Was heard from the lips of a little child
As she bounded in from play.
The mother's eyes filled up with tears;
She turned to her darling fair,
And smoothed away from the sunny brow
Its treasures of golden hair.

"Why, mother's eyes are blue, my sweet,
And grandpa's hair is gray,
And the love we bear our darling child
Grows stronger every day."
"But what did they mean?" persisted the child;
"For I saw two cripples to-day,
And one of them said he fought for the blue;
The other, he fought for the gray.

"Now, he of the blue had lost a leg,
And the other had but one arm,
And both seemed worn and weary and sad,
Yet their greeting was kind and warm.
They told of battles in days gone by;
Till it made my young blood thrill;
The leg was lost in the Wilderness fight,
And the arm on Malvern Hill.

"They sat on the stone by the farm-yard gate,
And talked for an hour or more,
Till their eyes grew bright and their hearts seemed warm
With fighting their battles o'er.
And parting at last with a friendly grasp,
In a kindly, brotherly way,
Each calling on God to speed the time
Uniting the blue and gray."

Then the mother thought of other days—
Two stalwart boys from her riven;

How they knelt at her side and, lisping, prayed,
"Our Father which art in Heaven;"
How one wore the gray and the other the blue;
How they passed away from sight,
And had gone to the land where gray and blue
Are merged in colors of light.

And she answered her darling with golden hair,
While her heart was sadly wrung
With the thoughts awakened in that sad hour
By her innocent, prattling tongue;
"The blue and the gray are the colors of God;
They are seen in the sky at even,
And many a noble, gallant soul
Has found them passports to Heaven."

HUMAN NATURE.

Two little children, five years old,
Marie the gentle, Charlie the bold;
Sweet and bright and quaintly wise,
Angels both, in their mother's eyes.

But you, if you follow my verse, shall see
That they were as human as human can be,
And had not yet learned the maturer art
Of hiding the "self" of the finite heart.

One day they found, in their romp and play,
Two little rabbits soft and gray—
Soft and gray, and just of a size,
As like each other as your two eyes.

All day long the children made love
To the dear little pets—their treasure-trove;
They kissed and hugged them until the night
Brought to the conies a glad respite.

Too much fondling doesn't agree
With the rabbit nature, as we shall see,
For ere the light of another day
Had chased the shadows of night away,

One little pet had gone to the shades,
Or, let us hope, to perennial glades,
Brighter and softer than any below—
A heaven where good little rabbits go.

The living and dead lay side by side,
And still alike as before one died;
And it chanced that the children came singly to view
The pets they had dreamed of all the night through.

First came Charlie, and, with sad surprise,
Beheld the dead with streaming eyes
Howe'er, consoling, he said,
"Poor little Marie—*her rabbit's dead!*"

Later came Marie, and stood aghast;
She kissed and caressed it, but at last
Found voice to say, while her young heart bled,
"I'm so sorry for Charlie—*his rabbit's dead!*"

THE SPELLIN' SCHOOL.

See that crevice in the floor—
Slender line from desk to door,
First meridian of the school—
Which all the scholars toe by rule.
Ranged along in rigid row,
Inky, golden, brown, and tow,
Are heads of spellers high and low,
Like notes in music sweet as June,
Dotting off a dancing tune.

Boy of Bashan takes the lead—
Roughly thatched his bullet-head—
At the foot an eight-year old
Stands with head of trembling gold;
Watch her when the word is missed!
Her eyes are like an amethyst,
Her fingers dove-tailed, lips apart;
She knows that very word by heart
And swings like any pendulum,
Trembling lest it fail to come.

Runs the word along the line,
Like the running of a vine,
Blossoms out from lip to lip,
Till the girl in azure slip
Catches breath and spells the word,
Flits up the class like any bird,
Cheeks in bloom with honest blood,
And proudly stands where Bashan stood!

SUNDAY NIGHT.

THREE little curly heads golden and fair,
Three pairs of hands that are lifted in prayer,
Three little figures in garments of white,
Three little mouths that are kissed for good-night,
Three little gowns that are folded away,
Three little children who rest from their play,
Three little hearts that are full of delight,
For this is the close of a sweet Sunday night.

And mamma had clustered them all round her knee,
And made them as happy as children could be;
She told to them stories of Jesus of old
Who called little children like lambs to His fold;
Who gathered them up in His arms to caress,
And blessed them as only a Saviour could bless,
While the innocent faces grew tender and bright
With the sweet, earnest talk of the calm Sunday night.

And the blue eyes of Bennie had widen'd with fear,
While Maidie had dropped an occasional tear,
When they heard of the lions and Daniel so bold,
And Joseph who once by his brethren was sold,
And the children who walked 'mid the furnace of flame,
Till the Angel of God in his purity came,
Walking unharmed in their garments of white,—
Oh, these were sweet stories to hear Sunday night!

And Maidie had said—the dear little child—
Looking up in the face of her mother so mild,
"I wish—oh, so much!—I wish, mamma dear,
When the angels were walking they'd come to us here;
I'd like once to see them, so shining and fair,
Come floating and floating right down through the air.
Let's ask them to come," said the wee little sprite,
"Let's ask them to come to *us* this Sunday night."

Then mamma told in her grave, gentle way,
How the angels were guarding the children each day;
How they stood softly round by the little one's bed;
How the blessings descended alike on each head;
But when they were naughty or willfully bad,
Then the Father was grieved and His angels were sad.
"Ah, I mean to be good," lisped the baby, "and then
I may see them some time when they're coming to Ben!"

Oh, the innocent children! How little they know
Of the dear eyes in heaven bent on them below;

Of the guardian spirits, who close by their side
Are watching and waiting to strengthen and guide;
And now, as they lie wrapped in dreams and in sleep,
How ceaseless the vigils the angels will keep!
And mamma prays, "Father, oh, guide them aright,
And send Thy good angels to guard them to-night!"

YE BALLAD OF CHRISTMAS.

SING a song of Christmas!
Pockets full of gold;
Plums and cakes for Polly's stocking,
More than it can hold.
Pudding in the great pot,
Turkey on the spit,
Merry faces around the fire—
Sorrow? not a bit!

Sing a song of Christmas!
Carols in the street,
Bundles going home with people,
Everywhere we meet.
Holly, fir, and spruce boughs
Green upon the wall,
Spotless snow along the road,
More going to fall.

Sing a song of Christmas!
Empty pockets here;
Windows broken, garments thin,
Stove black and drear.
Noses blue and frosty,
Fingers pinched and red,
Little hungry children going
Supperless to bed.

Sing a song of Christmas—
Tears are falling fast;
Empty is the baby's chair,
Since 'twas Christmas last.
Wrathfully the north wind
Wails across the snow,
Is there not a little grave
Frozen down below?

Sing a song of Christmas!
Thanks to God on high
For the tender hearts abounding
With His charity!
Gifts for all the needy,
For the sad hearts, love,
And a little angel smiling
In sweet heaven above!

CHILD'S MORNING HYMN.

SAFELY guarded by Thy presence,
By Thy tender love and power,
Holy Father! Thou hast brought me
To this peaceful happy hour.

While the night shades gather round me,
While "I laid me down and slept,"
'Twas Thy mercy that sustained me,
And my life in being kept.

Thoughts of all this care so tender,
Wakes a morning hymn of praise,
While a song of full thanksgiving,
Here and now to Thee I raise.

Strengthened thus in mind and body,
Help me to begin anew,
In the race of love and duty,
And the *right* each hour pursue.

So, when all life's changing seasons,
Fraught with "weal or woe," are past,
Kept and saved by love eternal,
Praise shall crown the work at last.

THE GOOD SHIP "NEVER-FAIL."

"WHY don't you launch your boat, my boy?"
I asked the other day,
As strolling idly on the beach
I saw my lads at play;
One blue-eyed rogue shook back his curls,
And held his ship to me,

"I'm giving her a name," he cried,
"Before she goes to sea;
We rigged her out so smart and taut,
With flag and snow-white sail,
And now I'll trust her to the waves,
And call her 'Never-Fail.'"

The little ship sailed proudly out,
Through mimic rock and shoal,
The child stood watching on the beach
His vessel reach its goal;
The wind had risen soft at first,
But wilder soon it blew,
It strained and bent the slender mast,
That still rose straight and true;
"Yet," cried the boy, "my ship is safe,
In spite of wind and gale,
Her sails are strong, her sides are firm,
Her name is 'Never-Fail.'"

And presently the wind was lulled,
The little bark came home,
No wreck, although her sails were wet,
Her deck all washed with foam;
And loudly laughed my true boy then,
As at his feet she lay.
And wisely spoke my true boy then,
Although 'twas said in play—
"Papa, I thought if mast and sail
And tackle all were true,
With such a name as 'Never-Fail,'
She'd sail the wide sea through."

PLANTING HIMSELF TO GROW.

DEAR little bright-eyed Willie,
Always so full of glee,
Always so very mischievous,
The pride of our home is he.

One bright summer day we found him
Close by the garden wall,
Standing so grave and dignified
Beside a sunflower tall.

His tiny feet he had covered
With the moist and cooling sand;
The stalk of the great, tall sunflower
He grasped with his chubby hand.

When he saw us standing near him,
Gazing so wonderingly
At his babyship, he greeted us
With a merry shout of glee.

We asked our darling what pleased him;
He replied with a face aglow,
"Mamma, I'm going to be a man;
I've planted myself to grow!"

"THANKS TO YOU."

EVERY day for a month of Sundays,
Saturdays, Tuesdays, Fridays, Mondays,
Jack had pondered the various means
And methods pertaining to grinding machines,
Until he was sure he could build a wheel
That, given the sort of dam that's proper,
Would only need some corn in the hopper
To turn out very respectable meal.

Jerry, and Jane, and Joe, and the others,
Jack's incredulous sisters and brothers,
Gave him credit for good intentions,
But took no stock in the boy's inventions.
In fact, they laughed them quite to scorn;
Instead of wasting his time, they said,
He would be more likely to earn his bread
Planting potatoes or hoeing corn

Bessie alone, when all the rest
Crushed his spirit with jibe and jest,
Whispered softly, "Whatever they say,
I know you will build the wheel some day!"
Chirping crickets and singing birds
Were not so sweet as her heartsome words;
Straight he answered, "If ever I do,
I know it will only be thanks to you!"

Many a time sore heart and brain
Leap at a word, grown strong again,
Thanks to her, as the story goes,
Hope and courage in Jack arose;
Till one bright day in the meadow-brook
There was heard a sound as of water plashing,
And Bessie watched with her happy look
The little wheel in the sunlight flashing.

By and by, as the years were fraught
With fruit of his earnest toil and thought,
Brothers and sisters changed their tune—
"Our Jack," they cried, "will be famous soon!"
Which was nothing more than Bessie knew,
She said, and had known it all the while!
But Jack replied with a kiss and a smile,
"If ever I am, it is thanks to you!"

A LITTLE GIRL'S WONDER.

WHAT do the birds say, I wonder, I wonder,
With their chitter and chatter? It isn't all play,
Do they scold, do they fret at some boggle or blunder,
As we fret, as we scold day after day?

Do their hearts ever ache, I wonder, I wonder,
At anything else than the danger that comes
When some enemy threatens them over or under
The great, leafy boughs of their great leafy homes?

Do they vow to be friends, I wonder, I wonder,
With promises fair and promises sweet,
Then, quick as a wink, at a word fall asunder,
As human friends do, in a moment of heat?

But day after day I may wonder and wonder,
And ask them no end of such questions as these—
With chitter and chatter, now over, now under,
The big, leafy boughs of the big, leafy trees.

They dart and they skim, with their bills full of plunder,
But never a word of an answer they give,
And never a word shall I get, though I wonder
From morning till night, as long as I live.

MOTHER GOOSE.

"TELL me a story, mamma,
One that is not very long,
I am getting so tired and sleepy,
Or sing me a little song—
Something about the boy in blue
That watched the cows and sheep,
Who ought to get up and blow the horn,
But he lies in the hay asleep."

And I answered with quick impatience,
While he hung his sleepy head,
"No, not a story or song to-night,
Bertie must go to bed."
But after the room was silent,
And the weary boy asleep,
And never a sound came on my ears
Save the lonely cricket's peep.

The voice with the tone of pleading
Kept coming again and again,
"Tell me a story or sing me a song,"
Till I could not bear the pain;
So I went with stealthy footstep
To see how my darling slept;
Weak and foolish though it may seem,
I knelt by the bed and wept,

To think that I had refused him
The song that he loved so well,
And refused the simple story
That none but a mother can tell.
And I said, "Sleep on, sweet dreamer;
Fear not the cows and the sheep;
Dream that you lie in the meadow,
Under the hay asleep.
All too soon you will waken,
To watch o'er the field of corn;
All too soon will the sheep get in,
Though you bravely blow your horn."

THE PLAY-HOUSE.

UNDER a fir in the garden ground
A strange habitation to-day I found,
Built of bushes, and bark, and boards,
And holding hidden the queerest hoards.

There were bits of crockery, sticks, and stones,
Shreds of pink calico, strings of cones,
Crumbs of candle, a picture-book,
And, strangest of all, in a cosy nook
Was an idol made in the image of man,
With charcoal eyes, and stuffed with bran.

"Were they heathens who dwelt there?" Oh, no, indeed.
"Were they animals?" Yes, of the kind that can read,
And laugh and cry, or be wicked and pray,
And when they are old their hair grows gray.

Their names are Margery, Ned, and Sue;
Their curls are brown, and their eyes are blue;
And they builded there in the summer heat,
As glad as the birds, and sang as sweet.

The birds that built in the tree-tops high
Are singing under a summer sky;
But the dear little builders who toiled below
Are singing here in the firelight glow.

FANNY'S MUD PIES.

UNDER the apple-tree, spreading and thick,
Happy with only a pan and a stick,
On the soft grass in the meadow that lies,
Our little Fanny is making mud pies.

On her bright apron, and bright drooping head,
Showers of pink and white blossoms are shed;
Tied to a branch, that seems just meant for that,
Dances and flutters her little straw hat.

Gravely she stirs, with a serious look,
Making believe she's a true pastry cook;
Sundry brown splashes on forehead and eyes
Show that our Fanny is making mud pies.

But all the soil of her innocent play
Clean soap and water will soon wash away;
Many a pleasure in daintier guise
Leaves darker traces than Fanny's mud pies.

Dash, full of joy in the bright summer day,
Zealously chases the robins away,
Barks at the squirrels, or snaps at the flies,
All the while Fanny is making mud pies.

Sunshine and soft summer breezes astir,
While she is busy, are busy with her,—
Cheeks rosy glowing, and bright sparkling eyes,
Bring they to Fanny while making mud pies.

Dollies and playthings are all laid away,
Not to come out till the next rainy day;
Under the blue of those sweet summer skies
Nothing so pleasant as making mud pies.

THE NAUGHTY BAIRN.

THE bairnie sat on the hillock hard,
The bright little brook beside,
With a world of care on his bonnie face,
And the tears on his cheek scarce dried.

A naughty boy the bairn had been,
He had strayed from school away.
For the lessons were hard, and he could not learn,
And he longed, oh, he longed to play.

He put his books in his satchel worn,
And kissed the mother good-bye;
And smiled at her caution to walk in the road,
For the grass was scarcely dry.

The naughty bairn! he had in his mind
How merry it would be
To go and sit by the babbling brook,
And the pebbles and flowers see.

He could not bear to think of the school,
And the long, long, tiresome day:
So he laid his satchel 'neath the old stone wall,
And hied to the brook away.

He tossed the pebbles in the waters bright,
And plucked the sweet wild flowers;
And thought what a merry way this was
To spend the morning hours.

So he merrily played till the sun went down,
In a sea of crimson fire;
And he saw o'er the meadows slowly creep
The shadow of the village spire.

And then he remembered he must go home,
And he thought of his mother's frown;
And then first he saw his mud-soiled hands,
And the stains on his best school gown.

And somehow the brook as it rippled along,
Sang a quaint and a sad, sad lay;
It sang to the bairn of the stolen hours,
And the lost and wasted day.

And home through the gloaming the bairnie strayed,
But the smile of the day was gone;
For, child as he was, he felt the grief
That always follows wrong.

Though the doing wrong may seem merry and light,
The mem'ry is cold and chill;
And the only pleasure we can truly know,
Is doing the Father's will.

THE SCHOOL-BOY.

WE bought him a box for his books and things,
And a cricket-bag for his bat;
And he looked the brightest and best of kings
Under his new straw hat.

We handed him into the railway train
With a troop of his young compeers,
And we made as though it were dust and rain
Were filling our eyes with tears.

We looked in his innocent face to see
The sign of a sorrowful heart;
But he only shouldered his bat with glee
And wondered when they would start.

'Twas not that he loved not as heretofore,
For the boy was tender and kind;
But his was a world that was all before
And ours was a world behind.

'Twas not his fluttering heart was cold,
For the child was loyal and true;
And the parents love the love that is old
And the children the love that is new.

And we came to know that love is a flower
Which only groweth down;
And we scarcely spoke for the space of an hour
As we drove back through the town.

"HARE AND HOUNDS."

"WHAT shall we do?" the children said,
By the spirit of frolic and mischief led,
Frank and Lulu and Carrie, three
As full of nonsense as they could be:
Who never were known any fun to stop
Until they were just about ready to drop.
Frank, whose "knowledge-box" surely abounds
With games, spoke up for "Hare and Hounds."
"Down the cellar or up the stair,
Here and there, and everywhere,
You must follow, for I'm the Hare!"
Lulu and Carrie gave quick consent,
And at cutting their papers and capers went,
For the stairs were steep, and they must not fail
To have enough for a good long trail.
Away went the Hare
Right up the stair,
And away went the Hounds, a laughing pair;
And Tony, who sat
Near Kitty, the cat,
And was really a dog worth looking at,
With a queer grimace
Soon joined the race,
And followed the game at a lively pace!
Then puss, who knew
A thing or two,
Prepared to follow the noisy crew,
And never before or since, I ween,
Was ever beheld such a hunting scene!
The Hare was swift; and the papers went
This way and that, to confuse the scent;
But Tony, keeping his nose in air,
In a very few moments betrayed the Hare,
Which the children told him was hardly fair.

I can not tell you how long they played,
Of the fun they had, or the noise they made;
For the best of things in this world, I think,
Can ne'er be written with pen and ink.
But Bridget, who went on her daily rounds,
Picking up after the "Hare and Hounds,"
Said she didn't mind hearing their lively capers,
But her back was broke with scraps o' papers.

Carrie, next day, couldn't raise her head;
Frank and Lulu were sick in bed;
The dog and the cat were a used-up pair,
And all of them needed the doctor's care.
The children themselves can hardly fail
To tack a moral upon this trail;
And I guess on rather more level grounds
They'll play their next game of "Hare and Hounds."

CHURN SLOWLY.

A LITTLE maid in the morning sun
Stood merrily singing and churning—

"Oh, how I wish this butter was done,
Then off to the fields I'd be turning!"
So she hurried the dasher up and down,
Till the farmer called, with a half-made frown,
"Churn slowly!

"Don't play the dasher so fast, my dear,
It's not so good for the butter,
And will make your arms ache, too, I fear,
And put you all in a flutter—
For this is the rule, wherever you turn,
Don't be in haste whenever you churn—
'Churn slowly!'

"If you'd see your butter come nice and sweet,
Don't churn with a nervous jerking,
But ply the dasher slowly and neat—
You'll hardly know you're working;
And when the butter has come, you'll say,
'Yes, this is surely the very best way'—
Churn slowly!"

Now, little folks, do you think that you
A lesson can find in butter?
Don't be in haste, whatever you do,
Or get yourself in a flutter;
And while you stand at life's great churn,
Let the farmer's words to you return,
"Churn slowly!"

TWO SCHOOL-BOYS.

TWO school-boys on their way to school
I day by day was meeting;
Yet though I met them day by day,
We each and all pursued our way,
Nor exchanged a friendly greeting.

At last I got to nod and smile,
To smile they, too, were willing;
And then I used to stop and stand,
And often shake them by the hand,
And sometimes tip a shilling;

Till it became a daily treat
To meet these morning scholars:
I loved to see their merry looks,
Though schoolward bound, with bag of books,
Bright cheeks, and shining collars.

Soon came the summer holidays,
And when they were half over,
I took a trip to Germany,
And three months passed away ere I
Recrossed the straits of Dover.

Again I took that old, old walk—
What time the leaves were yellow,
The autumn day was very still—
Just at the bottom of the hill
I met *one* little fellow.

He hailed me with a joyful cry
Of joyfullest delectation:
I laughed to see him laughing so.
"But where's our friend?" "What! don't you know?
He died in the vacation."

How was it that I turned aside,
With rough, abruptest bearing?
No matter; on the instant I
Turned off, nor even said, "Good-bye,"
And left the youngster staring.

THE MORNING SONG.

SING, little daughter, sing;
Sing me your morning song,
Thanking our Father for His love
And care the whole night long.

Sing out with cheerful heart,
Sing out with cheerful voice;
The tones of gratitude to God
Will make my heart rejoice.

Thank Him for parents dear,
Thy father and thy mother;
Thank Him for little sister Bess,
Thank Him for little brother.

Thank Him for pleasant home,
Thank Him for many a friend,
For mercies which we can not count,
For mercies without end.

Thank Him for health and strength,
Thank Him for clothes and food,
Thank Him for light and the fresh air,
Thank Him for every good.

Thank Him for pleasant days,
For sunshine and for showers,
For the green grass and lofty trees,
And for the fair wild flowers.

Thank Him, oh, most of all,
For His most Holy Word,
Wherein we read the wondrous love
Of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank Him that Christ has died
That we might die to sin;
Thank Him that Christ is risen again,
That we His heaven may win.

Sing, little daughter, sing;
Sing forth with heart and voice,
Thanking the Lord for all His gifts;
Rejoice, my child, rejoice.

THE BOY I LOVE.

My boy, do you know the boy I love?
I fancy I see him now;
His forehead bare in the sweet spring air,
With the wind of hope in his waving hair,
With sunrise on his brow.

He is something near your height, may be,
And just about your years;
Timid as you; but his will is strong,
And his love of right and his hate of wrong
Are mightier than his fears.

He has the courage of simple truth,
The trial that he must bear;
The peril, the ghost that frights him most,
He faces boldly, and like a ghost
It vanishes in air.

As wild-fowl take, by river and lake,
The sunshine and the rain,
With cheerful, constant hardihood,
He meets the bad luck and the good,
The pleasure and the pain.

Come friends in need? With heart and deed
He gives himself to them.
He has the grace which reverence lends—
Reverence, the crowning flower that bends
The upright lily-stem.

Though deep and strong his sense of wrong,
Fiery his blood and young,
His spirit is gentle, his heart is great,
He is swift to pardon and slow to hate,
And master of his tongue.

Fond of his sports? No merrier lad's
Sweet laughter ever rang!
But he is so generous and so frank,
His wildest wit, or his maddest prank,
Can never cause a pang.

His own sweet ease, all things that please,
He loves, like any boy;
But fosters a prudent fortitude;
Nor will he squander a future good
To buy a fleeting joy.

Face brown or fair? I little care
Whatever the hue may be,
Or whether his eyes are dark or light;
If his tongue be true and his honor bright,
He is still the boy for me.

Where does he dwell? I can not tell;
Nor do I know his name.

Or poor or rich? I don't mind which;
Or learning Latin, or digging ditch,
I love him all the same.

With high, brave heart, perform your part,
Be noble and kind as he;
Then, some fair morning, when you pass,
Fresh from glad dreams, before your glass,
His likeness you may see.

You are puzzled? What! you think there is not
A boy like him—surmise
That he is only a bright ideal?
But you have power to make him real,
And clothe him to our eyes.

You have rightly guessed: in each pure breast
Is his abiding-place.
Then let your own true life portray
His beauty, and blossom day by day
With something of his grace.

THE LESSON.

[A beautiful answer was given by a little Scotch girl; when her class at school was examined, she replied to the question, "What is patience?"—"Wait a wee, and dinna weary."]

A VILLAGE school-room—this the scene—
Aglow with a slant sun cheery:
A dominie there, of youthful mien,
With the sun of his spirit sharp and keen,
And a class of girls in serried row,
Some taller, and some of stature low:
And some like the morning sun, afire
To reach the summit of brave desire;
And, as aye, some unco' dreary!

"I canna an' winna teach, and ye
Sae stupid the while I query—
Nae vision for ocht but vanity!"
With thundering rap the dominie
Out-blurted, chafed by a listless girl,
Whose only care seemed to smooth and twirl
Her apron streamers. "Will onie lass
Mak' answer in a' this glaikit class?"
The dominie sighed aweary.

"Oh, ay," said a little one, "I can tell."
"Weel, out wi't, then, my dearie"—
And the frown from the master's forehead fell,
For the sweetest girl in school was Nell—
"I wan't ye to show me the meaning plain
O' *patience;* sin' ow'r and ow'r again
I've put it this day!" Then the little maid,
With a rougish twinkle, soberly said,
"Wait a wee' and dinna weary."

GRANDFATHER'S BARN.

OH, don't you remember our grandfather's barn,
Where our cousins and we met to play:
How we climbed on the beams and the scaffolds high,
Or tumbled at will on the hay?
How we sat in a row on the bundles of straw,
And riddles and witch stories told,
While the sunshine came in through the cracks of the south,
And turned all the dust into gold?

How we played hide-and-seek in each cranny and nook,
Wherever a child could be stowed;
Then we made us a coach of a hogshead of rye,
And on it to "Boston" we rode?
And then we kept store, and sold barley and oats,
And corn by the bushel or bin;
And straw for our sisters to braid into hats,
And flax, for our mothers to spin.

Then we played we were biddies, and
cackled and crowed,
Till grandmother in haste came to
see
If the weasles were killing the old
speckled hen,
Or whatever the matter might be;
How she patted our heads when she
saw her mistake,
And called us her sweet "chicken-
dears!"
While a tear dimmed her eye as the
picture recalled
The scenes of her own vanished
years.

How we tittered and swung, and played
meeting and school,
And Indian, and soldier, and bear!
While up on the rafter the swallows
kept house,
Or sailed through the soft summer
air.
How we longed to peep into their curi-
ous nests!
But they were too far overhead;
So we wished we were giants, or
winged like the birds,
And then we'd do wonders, we said.

And don't you remember the racket
we made
When selling at auction the hay;
And how we wound up with a keel-
over leap
From the scaffold down into the bay?
When we went in to supper, our grand-
father said,
If he had not once been a boy,
He should thought that the Hessians
were sacking the town,
Or an earthquake had come to de-
stroy.

LITTLE BAGGAGE.

WAITING at a wayside station
For a weary hour's duration,
Lost in anxious cogitation,
Over this and that;
In there tripped a little maiden,
Box and bag and basket laden,
And beside me sat.

Little baggage! rich in treasure;
Youth, and hope, and heart for pleas-
ure,
Sweet contentment without measure,
All I once possessed.
Small, fair fingers, folded quaintly,
Blue eyes very calm and saintly,
Very full of rest.

Little dove of peace, I thought her,
Bless the happy stars that brought her!
To my care-worn heart I caught her,
Though she never knew.
And the dark cloud of repining
Sudden showed its silver lining
Bright against the blue.

Oh, the charm of childhood's graces!
Changing earth's most desert places
Into such a fair oasis,
Fresh with morning dew;
That the world, grown old and dreary,
Seems less work-a-day and weary,
And hope wakes anew.

Sooner can their freshness free us
From the cares that years decree us,
Than the fabled child of Zeus
Could to youth restore.
Happy who the myth believing,
And the nectar cup receiving,
Lives a child once more.

LITTLE BROWN HANDS.

THEY drive home the cows from the
pasture,
Up through the long shady lane,
Where the quail whistles loud in the
wheat-fields,
That are yellow with ripening grain.
They find, in the thick, waving grasses,
Where the scarlet-lipped strawberry
grows,
They gather the earliest snow-drops
And the first crimson buds of the
rose.

They toss the hay in the meadow;
They gather the elder-bloom white;
They find where the dusky grapes purple
In the soft-tinted October light.
They know where the apples hang ripest,
And are sweeter than Italy's wines;
They know where the fruit hangs the thickest
On the long, thorny blackberry vines.

They gather the delicate sea-weeds,
And build tiny castles of sand;
They pick up the beautiful sea-shells—
Fairy barks that have drifted to land.
They wave from the tall, rocking tree-tops,
Where the oriole's hammock-nest swings,
And at night-time are folded in slumber
By a song that a fond mother sings.

Those who toil bravely are strongest;
The humble and poor become great;
And from these brown-handed children
Shall grow mighty rulers of state.
The pen of the author and statesman—
The noble and wise of the land—
The sword, and chisel, and palette
Shall be held in the little brown hand.

A FANCY.

I SUPPOSE if all the children
Who have lived through ages long
Were collected and inspected
They would make a wondrous throng.
Oh, the babble of the Babel!
Oh, the flutter of the fuss!
To begin with Cain and Abel,
And to finish up with us!

Think of all the men and women
Who are now and who have been,
Every nation since creation
That this world of ours has seen;
And of all of them, not any
But was once a baby small,
While of children, oh, how many
Never have grown up at all!

Some have never laughed or spoken,
Never used their rosy feet;
Some have even flown to heaven
Ere they knew that earth was sweet.
And indeed I wonder whether,
If we reckon ev'ry birth,
And bring such a flock together
There is room for them on earth?

Who will wash their smiling faces,
Who their saucy ears will box?
Who will dress them and caress them?
Who will darn their little socks?
Where are arms enough to hold them?
Hands to pat each shining head?
Who will praise them? who will scold them?
Who will pack them off to bed?

Little happy Christian children,
Little savage children, too,
In all stages of all ages,
That our planet ever knew!
Little princes and princesses,
Little beggars, wan and faint,
Some in very handsome dresses,
Naked some, bedaubed with paint.

Only think of the confusion
Such a motley crowd would make!
And the clatter of their chatter,
And the things that they would break!
Oh, the babble of the Babel!
Oh, the flutter of the fuss!
To begin with Cain and Abel,
And to finish off with us!

THE YELLOW COTTAGE.

'MID fields with useless daisies white,
Between a river and a wood,
With not another house in sight,
The low-roofed yellow cottage stood,

Where I,
Long years ago, a little maid,
Through all life's rosy morning played.

No other child the region knew;
My only playmate was myself,
And all our books, a treasured few,
Were gathered on a single shelf;
But, oh!
Not wealth a king might prize could be
What those old volumes were to me!

On winter's night beside the fire,
In summer, sitting in the door,
I turned, with love that did not tire,
Their well-worn pages o'er and o'er;
In me,
Though sadly fallen, it is true,
Their heroines all lived anew!

One day, about my neck a ruff
Of elder flowers with fragrant breath,
I was, with conscious pride enough
To suit the part, Elizabeth;
The next,
Ensnared by many wily plots,
I sighed, the hapless Queen of Scots!

Where darting swallows used to flit
Close to me, on some jutting rocks,
Above the river, I would sit
For hours, and wreath my yellow locks,
And trill
A child's shrill song, and, singing, play
It was a siren's watching lay.

On Sundays, underneath the tree
That overhung the orchard wall,
While watching, one by one, to see
The ripe, sweet apples fall,
I tried
My very best to make believe
I was in Eden and was Eve!

Oh, golden hours! when I, to-day,
Would make a truce with care,
No more of queens, in bright array,
I dream, or sirens fair;
In thought,
I am again the little maid
Who round the yellow cottage played.

SOMEBODY'S MOTHER.

THE woman was old and ragged and gray,
And bent with the chill of the winter's day:

The street was wet with a recent snow,
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.

She stood at the crossing and waited long,
Alone, uncared-for, amid the throng

Of human beings who passed her by,
Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye.

Down the street, with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of "school let out,"

Came the boys like a flock of sheep,
Hailing the snow piled white and deep.

Past the woman so old and gray
Hastened the children on their way,

Nor offered a helping hand to her,
So meek, so timid, afraid to stir

Lest the carriage wheels or the horses' feet
Should crowd her down in the slippery street.

At last came one of the merry troop—
The gayest laddie of all the group:

He paused beside her, and whispered low,
"I'll help you across if you wish to go."

Her aged hand on his strong young arm
She placed, and so, without hurt or harm,

He guided the trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong.

Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.

"She's somebody's mother, boys, you know,
For all she's aged and poor and slow;

And I hope some fellow will lend a hand
To help my mother, you understand,

If ever she's poor and old and gray,
When her own dear boy is far away."

And "somebody's mother" bowed low her head
In her home that night, and the prayer she said

Was "God be kind to the noble boy,
Who is somebody's son and pride and joy!"

A MAY-DAY CAROL.

"AH! whither, fair maiden,
So bonny and bright,
Are your fairy feet hasting
At dawn's early light?"
"To gather May-flowers,
For this is the day
The virgin Spring ushers in
Beautiful May."

"Then gather sweet violets,
Meek-eyed and blue,
They'll catch from your bright orbs
A lovelier hue!"
"Ah! flatterer, flatterer,
Violets and eyes
Both catch their deep hue
From the bright Spring skies.

"Weave a buttercup garland,
And Nature outvie,
As they on your golden locks
Lovingly lie."
"Ah! flatterer, look!
There is Nature's pure gold
In the rift of yon rosy cloud's
Soft fleecy fold."

"Then gather anemones,
Waxen and pure;
Your brow is their rival,
Of that I am sure."
"Ah! flatterer, flatterer!
Under the snow,
That rivals all whiteness,
Pale anemones grow."

"Then come through the orchard,
With peach-blossoms laden;
Let the bloom catch the tint
From thy cheek, pretty maiden."
"Ah! flatterer, cease;
I have tarried too long;
The woodland is teeming
With perfume and song;
And the birds will not flatter,
Their warbling is true;
So a happy May morning,
And good-bye to you!"

EIGHTEEN.

A SOFT gray mist lies low in the valley,
And trails its folds o'er the green-robed hills—
It falls like a shadow across the river,
And mutely kisses the fern-edged rills,
Sweet in the woods I hear the singing—
The tuneful murmur of drowsy birds;
And my heart goes out in a glad thanksgiving—
A half-breathed prayer that is deeper than words.

"Father in heaven, who lifted the shadow
Off my heart where it lay like a river,
Lowly I thank Thee for op'ning the gateway—
For taking Thy child and her sorrow right in."
This is my prayer in the morn's gray dawning
Of this tender June-day-a-break in the skies;

Dark was the cloud that hung o'er life's morning,
Now the sun shines like an angel's eyes.

Eighteen to-day! this world lies before me—
A long wide path for my willing feet.
Down, dark Past! with your tears and mourning;
The Future is waiting glad and sweet.
Out of the dust I rise triumphant,
Hopeful and strong for the coming years;
Eighteen to-day; good-bye, lost childhood!
Good-bye, my weakness and useless tears!

Over the river the mist is rising,
The sun is kissing the verdant hills—
And it floods the meadow with tender beauty;
The song of the birds my being thrills.
The shadow is passing; the light is dawning,
Guide my footsteps, O Friend above!
Keep me safe till the night has fallen—
Safe in the shelter of Thy love.

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

Go forth in the Battle of Life, my boy,
Go while it is called to-day;
For the years go out, and the years come in,
Regardless of those who may lose or win—
Of those who may work or play.

And the troops march steadily on, my boy,
To the army gone before;
You may hear the sound of their falling feet,
Going down to the river where the two worlds meet;
They go to return no more.

There is room for you in the ranks, my boy,
And duty, too, assigned;
Step into the front with cheerful grace—
Be quick, or another may take your place,
And you may be left behind.

There is work to be done by the way, my boy,
That, you *never can tread again;*
Work for the loftiest, lowliest men—
Work for the plow, adze, spindle, and pen;
Work for the hands and the brain.

The *Serpent* will follow your steps, my boy,
To lay for your feet a snare;
And pleasure sits in her fairy bowers,
With garlands of poppies and lotus flowers
Enwreathing her golden hair.

Temptations will wait by the way, my boy,
Temptations without and within;
And spirits of evil, in robes as fair
As the holiest angels in Heaven wear,
Will lure you to deadly sin.

Then put on the armor of God, my boy,
In the beautiful days of youth;
Put on the helmet, breast-plate, and shield,
And the sword that the feeblest arm may wield
In the cause of Right and Truth.

And go to the Battle of Life, my boy,
With the peace of the Gospel shod,
And before High Heaven, do the best you can
For the great reward, for the good of man,
For the Kingdom and crown of God.

VACATION DAYS.

EACH year, early in the summer,
While yet 'tis blue, blue June,
Suddenly the wild birds waken,
And with a longing tune
Go song-singing of the children
That are shut from the sun;
"They are coming," the singers carol,
"For the school-days are done!"

And they sing the song of cherries
Along the garden wall;
And they sing the song of berries
That grow in thickets tall;
And they sing the song of rambles,
Long rambles in the sun:
"They are coming," the singers carol,
"For the school-days are done!"

And they sing the song of hammocks
Hung in the deep pine trees,
Where the children brown and brighten
With swaying in the breeze—
Happy, happy little children,
Just let out in the sun!
"They are coming," the singers carol,
"For the school-days are done!"

Give the world up to the children,
Yes, near and far and wide!
Let the willing welcomes waken
Up all the country side
Meet them, bird and bee and blossom,
And meet them, breeze and sun,
Carol! carol! Oh, carol! carol!
That the school-days are done!

GRADUATED.

A THOUSAND eyes behold the class-mates range
Their semicircles round the rector's chair,
While he, with stately-sounding old-world words,
Gives parchment honors there.

A thousand shining eyes! but none descry
The shape that's clearest to my dimming sight,
A shadow form that in yon goodly throng
Moveth as with a right.

A form as fair as any of the rest,
Pressing, like them, with eager tread of youth—
A face that not the brightest may outshine
For lovingness or truth!

See how 'tis moved with feelings of the hour!
With boyish pleasure, yet with manly pain;
Pleased with the prize, yet ready to prefer
The long, sweet strife again.

Ah, tear-dimmed eyes! it is in vain you try,
With the self-cheating spirit to restore
That shape unto the place that knew it once,
But knows it now no more.

He is not here, the earnest lad who threw
Himself so lovingly into the round
Of college life, the fullest that as yet
His brief young days had found.

He is not here. Far other prizes now
May beckon him. Oh, dear one, long away,
What high companionships content thee for
Thine absence here to-day?

What happy schools, far off, of love and joy
Have with their charms the gentle grief consoled
With which thy faithful spirit laid aside
The life it loved of old?

Not all the learning of the wise of earth
Could find an answer. Wearily, mine eye
Turns from the smiling company to seek
Outside the blue June sky.

Through open windows of the crowded church,
In still significance, it looketh down,
And tossing elm-boughs hush themselves to catch
The word it might make known.

The buzz within, the rector's stately speech,
Grow far-off to mine ear, and die away.
I find again the silence of thy strange,
Sad graduation day;

I hear again thy Master's simple words,
So low, so sweet, conferring thy degree:
"Of such my kingdom is; let none forbid
His coming unto me."

KATIE'S TREASURES.

In the soft October sunshine,
'Neath the forest's golden eaves,
Roamed a merry band of maidens,
In a crimson rain of leaves.
And 'mid ringing bursts of laughter,
Fluttering through the misty air,
All their young hearts' cherished treasures
Each with other did compare.

"I dwell in a lordly mansion,"
Cried a pair of scarlet lips,
"In the carpets' tufted roses,
Deep my lightest footfall dips.
Oh! the curtains and the pictures!
But, more beautiful than all,
You should see the western sunlight
Creep along the painted wall."

"Listen," quickly cried another,
"Listen, now, I pray, to me:
Years ago there was a necklace
Borne across the deep blue sea;
In its velvet-cushioned casket,
Stars could not so brightly shine,
But this chain of prisoned rainbows
By and by will all be mine."

"I have not such wondrous jewels,"
Proudly spoke another voice,
"But I'd rather have my *father*,
If I had to take my choice.
He has grown so very famous—
People almost kiss his hand,
And in time, I'm very certain,
He'll be ruler of the land."

Thus ran on the eager voices,
As they gayly had begun,
Till some tale of wondrous treasure,
Every child had told, save *one*.
"She will not have much to tell us,"
Whispered they, "poor little thing!"
But with smiles, said blue-eyed Katie,
"I'm the daughter of a king!"

Then they laughed: "Oh, princess, tell us,
Where the king, your father, dwells;
Do your mighty palace portals
Swing at touch of golden bells?"
Meekly answered gentle Katie,
Pushing back a floating curl,
"All the shining wall is golden,
Every gate a single pearl.

"And more glorious than the sunrise
Through the purple morning mist,
Brightly glow the brave foundations,
Jasper, sapphire, amethyst.
And within—such wondrous treasures,
Oh! what happiness to see!
But, when home my father calls me,
He will give them all to me."

Then the little maids grew thoughtful,
And they looked with tender eyes
On the sweet-faced little Katie,
Gazing upward to the skies.

And they said, "Oh, happy princess!
List'ning for the great King's call,
You have found the greatest treasure,
You are richest of us all."

"LITTLE CHILDREN."

KEEP a guard on your words, my darlings,
For words are wonderful things;
They are sweet, like the bees' fresh honey,
Like the bees, they have terrible stings.
They can bless, like the warm, glad sunshine,
And brighten a lonely life,
They can cut, in the strife of anger,
Like an open, two-edged knife.

Let them pass through your lips unchallenged,
If their errand is true and kind;
If they come to support the weary,
To comfort and help the blind.
If a bitter, revengeful spirit
Prompts the words, let them be unsaid;
They may flash through a brain like lightning,
Or fall on a heart like lead.

Keep them back if they're cold and cruel,
Under bar, and lock, and seal;
The wounds they make, my darlings,
Are always slow to heal.

May peace guard your lives, and ever,
From this time of your early youth,
May the words that you daily utter
Be the beautiful words of truth.

NOW.

"THERE is a good time coming, boys;"
So runs the hopeful song;
Such is the poetry of youth;
When life and hope are strong.
But when these buoyant days are passed,
Age cries: "How changed are men!
Things were not so when I was young;
The best of times was then."

"There is a good time coming, boys;"
The truth we will allow;
But, waiting not for brighter days,
There is a good time now.
Why not improve the present, then,
Where'er the future lead;
And let each passing moment's page
Bear proof of thought and deed?

"There is a good time coming, boys;"
And many a one has passed;
For each has had his own good time,
And will have to the last.
Then do thy work, while lingers youth
With freshness on its brow,
Still mindful of life's greatest truth,
The best of times is now.

HOME LIFE AND HOME SCENES

IN THE

COUNTRY.

HOME LIFE AND HOME SCENES IN THE COUNTRY.

A FOUR-LEAFED CLOVER.

A FOUR-LEAFED clover! In my chamber-drawer,
Turning my treasures over, where they lay,
I came across this leaf, grown dry and sere,
Yet holding still the faint perfume of May
That filled it when I plucked it from the hay.

'Twas years ago I found it. Happy chance
I thought it then, that laid it at my feet;
I put it softly, shyly, in my shoe,
And walked unheeding over blossoms sweet,
Wondering what fate my maiden steps would meet.

So, sauntering slowly where forget-me-nots
Swung in the breeze their tiny bells of blue,
And where wild grape-vines flung their tendrils wide,
I heard a step, swift, eager—one I knew,
And turning, in vexation, saw 'twas you.

"Why did you spoil my charm?" I cried in haste,
And when you asked what evil you had brought,
I said, with reddening cheeks and tear-wet eyes,
I never would reveal the harm you wrought
By coming to me when I wished you not.

You turned away in wonder at my mood,
And I stood still, half vexed and half ashamed;
Was this the girlhood's knight I hoped to meet?
This man with sinewy arm for labor framed?—
"A son of toil," I sneered, "most aptly named."

Ah, well! the years bring wisdom in their train;
And as I look into your face to-day,
Its clear, gray eyes down-shining into mine,
I thank my fate for that auspicious day
When clover-leaf and you came in my way.

AGAIN!

OH, sweet and fair! Oh, rich and rare,
That day so long ago,
And autumn sunshine everywhere,
The heather all aglow,
The ferns were clad in cloth of gold,
The waves sang on the shore;
Such suns will shine, such waves will sing
Forever, evermore.

Oh, fit and few! Oh, tried and true!
The friends who met that day,
Each one the other's spirit knew;
And so in earnest play
The hours flew past, until at last
The twilight kissed the shore;
We said: "Such days shall come again
Forever, evermore."

One day again, no cloud of pain
A shadow o'er us cast,
And yet we strove in vain, in vain
To conjure up the past:
Like, but unlike the sun that shone,
The waves that beat the shore,
The words we said, the songs we sung,
Like—unlike—evermore.

For ghosts unseen crept in between,
And, when our songs flowed free,
Sang discords in an undertone,
And marred the harmony.
"The past is ours, not yours," they said,
"The waves that beat the shore,
Though like the same, are not the same,
Oh, never, never more!"

YOU AND I.

We meet to-day, we part to-morrow;
You and I;
If in secret, silent sorrow,
You regret the stern decree,
And I sigh,
Dreaming dreams of what might be,
Would fate only leave us free,
Will it make life less worth living?
Will it make love less worth giving?
Or, if we walked on together,
Would our joys be any brighter?
Would our sorrows be the lighter?
Time and tide,
In their hurried onward rushing,
Sweep us on, and, answer nothing.

Much is given ere the asking,
And we try,
Vainly, heart and brain both tasking,
To forget the bitter knowledge,
Asking why
Things unequal were created?
Why so many lives mismated
Curse the earth? forever grieving,
With deceit themselves deceiving,
When a word in candor spoken,
Would sad hearts forever lighten,
And sad eyes forever brighten;
What a change,
If we said things as we meant them,
And but meant them when we said them!

Years shall bless and years bereave us,
You and I,
As the summer-time shall leave us,
And the autumn tints veil softly
Youth's fair sky.
Other scenes ere long shall greet us,
Other friends will warmly meet us,
And, if wooing voices 'round us,
Fondly with their love have crowned us,
Shall we, yielding, tell to memory
It were better that no token
Kept our friendship still unbroken?
Or, at last,
Shall we, somehow, find each other
Dearer far than any other?

KEPT.

My lover and I stood on the shore;
His boat rocked out on the sun-lit bay;
A little flower from my breast he tore,
And a kiss from my lips he stole away.
"Never fear, little lass, never fear!" cried he,
"I will bring thy rosebud back to thee."

On the shining deck I saw him stand:
I saw him stand by the snowy sail;
He waved farewell with the flower in his hand,
But my heart beat quick and my cheek grew pale.
Though never a cloud was in the sky,
I shuddered to hear the sea-gulls cry.

The whole white fleet was outward bound.
Brave fisher-lads,—with a song they went!
The waves rolled in with a sullen sound,

And the day and the tide were
nearly spent.
The last sail, touched with an ashen
light,
Like a ghost sped into the dusky night.

Then back, as I stood on the shore
and prayed,
They came, for the storm-wind blew
apace.
The women came from their cots
afraid;
The salt spray sprinkled each pallid
face;
But while they murmured: "Alas!
Alack!"
I thought, "He will bring my rose-bud
back."

The great wind roared, and the hungry hiss
Of the seething brine on the flying
shore,
Seemed moaning and sighing only this:
"Ah, nevermore! ah, nevermore!"
We held each other close. The foam
Still whispered to me: "He will come
home."

The morning dawned on the awful
sea!
They came to land. "None lost?"
"But one."
I stood in my place all silently.
He went in the sunlight; he came
in the sun.
Washed to the shore, in his dear, dead
hand
He brought me my rosebud back to
land.

WOOING.

CAPTIVE little hand,
Wherefore trembling so?
Like a fluttering bird,
All your pulses stirred:
Would you, if you could—
Would you go?

Drooping, downcast eyes,
Filled with love's own light,
'Neath your snowy lid
All my world lies hid:
Why so shyly veiled
From my sight?

Lovely quivering lips,
With your wealth of red,
Speak the longed-for word.
First in Eden heard,
In your own sweet way
Be it said.

Eager, restless heart,
Longing for your mate,
What have you to fear?
Find contentment here;
To my tender love
Trust your fate.

Dainty little maid,
Graced with charms so sweet,
One bright glance bestow;
Nay—but I will know
If—ah, yes, for me,
Life's complete!

DON'T STAY LONG.

A LOOK of yearning tenderness
Beneath her lashes lies,
And hope and love unutterable
Are shadowed in her eyes,
As in some deep, unruffled stream
Are clouds and summer skies.

She passed to early womanhood,
From dreamy, sweet girl life,
And crossed the rosy threshold but
To find herself a wife;
Oh! gently should he lead her steps
Along the path of life!

And as she clasped her small white
hands
Upon his arms so strong,
How often like a summer sigh,
Or a sweet pleading song,
She whispers, with a parting kiss,
"Beloved one, don't stay long."

They're almost always on her lip,
 Her gentlest parting words,
Sweet as the fragrance from rose leaves
 When by soft zephyrs stirred,
And lingering in the memory
 Like songs of summer birds.

And in his heart they nestle warm
 When other scenes amid;
He stays not till she weary grows,
 And her fond eyes are hid
In tears which lie in bitterness
 Beneath each veiling lid.

And, oh, how many hearts are kept
 By that love-uttering song!
There's scarcely one who on life's waves
 Is swiftly borne along,
But what has heard from some dear lips
 These sweet words, "Don't stay long."

WEDDING-DAY WISHES.

SINCE I have not for your bridal
 Any precious offerings brought—
Gold, or gems, or costly fabric,
 By the curious workman wrought—

Let your thought admit the fancy,
 While you read the words I write,
That your friend's heart is a casket,
 And her wishes jewels bright.

Thus you shall be fairly furnished
 With all favors brides should wear,
For the neck, the wrists, the fingers,
 For your brow and shining hair.

Husband's love and faith should crown you,
 Better than wrought gems a queen;
Wifely truth and trust illumine,
 More than pearls could, race and mien.

Home and sweet content I wish you,
 More than lands and lofty hall—
Bracelets these, and golden neck-chain
 Holding you in willing thrall.

Daily, loving words of kindness,
 These for jeweled rings should be;
Better than the diamond's radiance
 Is the light of charity.

And for fairest, best adorning,
 Never wanting, ever bright,
Wear the "meek and quiet spirit,"
 Priceless in the Giver's sight.

These will fail not, though misfortune
 Sweep all earthly goods away;
God's dear smile of love and favor
 Turneth darkness into day.

OVER THE BARS.

'TWAS milking time, and the cows came up
 From the meadows sweet with clover,
And stood in the lane, while pretty Jane
 Had a quiet chat with the drover—
Such a quiet chat it scarcely seemed
 That a single word was spoken;
While a magic spell with the night dews fell,
 And the rhythm of song was unbroken.

The cattle stood at the lover's side,
 Without any show of vexation,
As though impressed with a five-bar rest
 Was a part of their rest-oration.
And as Jane listened to the notes that came
 Right under the bars and over,
Her heart took wing, the silly thing,
 And nestled up close to the drover.

She heard him say his home was poor,
 That he'd nothing but love to give her;
And she smiled content, as though love had spent
 Every arrow he had in his quiver;
She smiled content, when the evening air
 With voices of birds are ringing,

And her lips confessed that a lowly nest
Should never prevent her singing.

So over the bars the lovers lean,
In the joy of their sweet communion;
And their looks declare that poverty ne'er
Shall be a bar to their union;
Oh, sweetest music, go thread your rhymes,
Now under the bars and over;
Where pretty Jane, in the fragrant lane,
Bewitched the heart of the drover.

TWO OF THEM.

In the farm-house porch the farmer sat,
With his daughter having a cosy chat:
She was his only child, and he
Thought her as fair as a girl could be.
A wee bit jealous the old man grew,
If he fancied any might come to woo
His one pet lamb, and her loving care
He wished with nobody else to share.

"There should be two of you, child," said he;
"There should be two to welcome me
When I come home from the field at night:
Two would make the old homestead bright.
There's neighbor Grey with his children four
To be glad together. Had I one more,
A proud old father I'd be, my dear,
With two good children to greet me here."

Down by the gate 'neath the old elm-tree
Donald waited alone; and she
For whom he waited his love-call heard,
And on either cheek the blushes stirred.

"Father," she said, and knelt her down,
And kissed the hand that was old and brown—
"Father, there may be two, if you will,
And I—your only daughter still.

"Two to welcome you home at night;
Two to make the old homestead bright:
I—and somebody else." "I see,"
Said the farmer, "and whom may 'somebody' be?"
Oh, the dimples in Bessie's cheek,
That played with the blushes at hide-and-seek!
Away from his gaze she turned her head,
"One of neighbor Grey's children," she said.

"H'm!" said the farmer; "make it plain;
Is it Susan, Alice, or Mary Jane?"
Another kiss on the aged hand,
To help the farmer to understand (?)
"H'm," said the farmer: "yes; I see;
It is two for yourself and one for me."
But Bessie said, "There can be but one
For me and my heart till life is done."

A HAPPY WIFE.

He wraps me round with his riches,
He covers me up with his care,
And his love is the love of a manhood
Whose life is a living prayer.
I have plighted my woman's affections,
I have given my all in all,
And the flowers of a daily contentment
Renew their sweet lives ere they fall;
And yet like an instrument precious
That playeth an olden tune,
My heart in the midst of its blessings
Goes back to a day in June—

To a day when beneath the branches
I stood by a silent stream,
And saw in its bosom an image
As one seeth a face in a dream.

I would not resign his devotion,
No, not for a heart that lives!
Nor change one jot my condition
For the change that condition gives:
I should mourn not more for another,
Nor more for another rejoice,
Than now, when I weep at his absence,
Or welcome his step and his voice.
And yet like an instrument precious,
That playeth an olden tune,
My heart in the midst of its blessings
Goes back to a day in June—
To a day when, beneath the branches,
I stood in the shadowy light,
And heard the low words of a whisper
As one heareth a voice in the night.

RECONSTRUCTION.

In a wagon made of willow
Wheeled I once a little maiden,
Ringlets shining on the pillow,
Rolling homeward treasure laden,
Like a boat upon the billow.

Ten years fled. Ah! how I missed her
When we left the village school!
But she said she'd be my sister
As we lingered by the pool,
And I passionately kissed her.

Ten more fretting years renew it;
Little wagon made of willow;
Loving eyes are bent to view it;
Loving hands adjust the pillow,
And we've fitted rockers to it.

WEDDED.

Some quick and bitter words we said,
And then we parted. How the sun
Swam through a sullen sea of gray!
A chill fell on the summer day.
Life's best and happiest hours were done,
Friendship was dead.

How proud we went our separate ways,
And spake no word and made no moan;
She braided up her flowing hair,
That I had always called so fair,
Although she scorned my loving tone,
My word of praise.

And I? I matched her scorn with scorn,
I hated her with all my heart,
Until—we chanced to meet one day;
She turned her pretty head away;
I saw two pearly tear-drops start,
Lo! love was born.

Some fond, repenting word I said,
She answered only with a sigh;
But when I took her hand in mine
A radiant glory half divine
Flooded the earth and filled the sky.
Now we are wed.

AN AUGUST DAY.

Over the fields by winding ways
We wandered on together,
Under the flashing azure skies,
In a hush of August weather.
Round about us, afar and near,
We heard the locusts humming,
And the asters starring the lonely path
Laughed out to see us coming.

Bird songs out of the sunlit oak
Fell rippling through the shadow,
Like a spear of flame the cardinal flower
Burned out along the meadow.

Into our hearts the blithe wind blew,
Its own free gladness giving,
And all things laughed in the happy earth,
For the pure sweet joy of living.

Two roamed on with their eyes alight,
And their hearts too still for laughter,
Two in a revel of golden life,
Looked neither before nor after.
One went dreaming with downcast face
Through the hush of the woodland cover,
But one praised God from a trembling heart
That the shadow of pain was over.

BLACKBERRIES AND KISSES.

WE were up on the green old hill-side
Where the blackberry bushes grow,
And we gathered the ripe, sweet berries
Till the sun was getting low,
And somehow, where the fruit was ripest—
I could not account for this!—
We were sure to eat all the berries,
And sweeten them with a kiss.
Oh, I know of nothing better,
The whole year round, than this:
A handful of ripe blackberries
Made sweet with a lover's kiss.

"If they saw us eating the berries
In this new, but pleasant way,
They would say we were silly creatures,"
Said she: but I answered, "Nay.
They would say we were wise, my darling,
To eat our berries so,
For kisses are cheaper than sugar
In times like these, you know."
Oh, I know of nothing better,
The whole year round, than this:
A handful of ripe blackberries
Made sweet with a lover's kiss.

As we stood in the path together,
When our feet were homeward turned,
I whispered the sweet old question
That each lover's heart has learned.
I forget the words of her answer,
But I can remember this,
It was all my heart had hoped for,
And I took it with a kiss.
Oh, I know of nothing better,
The whole year round, than this:
A handful of ripe blackberries
Made sweet by a lover's kiss.

LICHEN.

LITTLE lichen, fondly clinging
In the wild wood to the tree;
Covering unseemly places,
Hiding all thy tender graces,
Ever dwelling in the shade,
Never seeing sunny glade.

Little lichen, emblem sweet
Of a friend, whom now I greet;
She, too, dwelleth in the shade,
Pineth not for sunnier glade,
Clinging to the dear home-walls,
Where scarce a ray of sunshine falls.

Yet in her heart such love abideth,
That she like the dark places hideth;
She would not be a roadside flower,
Nor long to dwell in sunny bower;
She loves the deep and woody shade,
She loves the *dark that God has made.*

She is not dazed with golden glare
Of worldly joy, however fair;
And in her little corner shineth,
A purer light, my soul divineth,
Than any earthly sunshine bringeth;
A light from Him to whom she clingeth.

THE GIRL FOR ME.

JUST fair enough to be pretty,
Just gentle enough to be sweet,
Just saucy enough to be witty,
Just dainty enough to be neat.

Just tall enough to be graceful,
Just slight enough for a fay,
Just dress enough to be tasteful,
Just merry enough to be gay.

Just tears enough to be tender,
Just sighs enough to be sad;
Tones soft enough to remember
Your heart through the cadence made glad.

Just meek enough for submission,
Just bold enough to be brave,
Just pride enough for ambition,
Just thoughtful enough to be grave.

A tongue that can talk without harming,
Just mischief enough to tease,
Manners pleasant enough to be charming,
That put you at once at your ease.

Disdain for silly presumption,
Sarcasm to answer a fool,
Cool contempt shown to assumption,
Proper dignity always the rule.

Flights of fairy fancy ethereal,
Devotion to science full paid,
Stuff of the sort of material
Poets and painters are made.

Generous enough, and kind-hearted,
Pure as the angles above;
Oh, from her may I never be parted,
For such is the maiden I love.

LOVERS' PRECEPT.

Do not let us take the highway, sweet;
It is full of curious, prying eyes.
Let us choose the wandering path that lies
Thro' the fields, and shuns the dust and heat—
Daisy-bordered, bridged by waving shade
Thro' whose interlacings glints the golden flood
Which the priest this morning, when he prayed,
Likened to the all-embracing love of God—
Sweet the text that followed, I could have wished no other:
"A new command I give, Love ye one another."

I turned to watch you as the words divine
Stole on my sense like music of the spheres;
A flush crept o'er your cheek, a mist of tears
Swam to your eyes, which drooped away from mine.
I saw the hand that held your book of prayer
Thrill like a flower swept by delicious gales;
But not a look would you vouchsafe me there.
Oh, lovely saint, shrined within altar veils,
Were you afraid to turn and face your brother
After the new command, "Love ye one another?"

I will absolve you for the look not given,
So fully doth suffice the look you give.
Droop not, shy, lily lids, but let me live
Forever, in your eyes serene, blue heaven!
Lay hand to heart, and tell me, maiden mine,
If in the long, strange years you do not see,
You fear you may regret the tender sign
Of love and trust which you now give to me,
Or wish in secret it had been some other
Who learned with you the lesson, "Love ye one another."

For life will not be all like this, alas!
A walk thro' meadows, under skies so fair,
With bobolinks a-trilling in the air,
And daisies blooming golden in the grass.
There will be rough and stormy days, my sweet,
When God behind a cloud will hide from sight,
And you and I, with hurt and weary feet,
Will pass through thorny ways to reach the light:
Shall it be hand-in-hand, dear, and patient with each other,
Remembering the message, "Love ye one another?"

MARGARET.

INTO the garden I walked;
Ne'er had I seen her before,
Under a budding white rose
She stood in the shade of the door.
Quiet and pale was her face,
But maidenly bright were her eyes,
Fair as the newly-born moon
When low in the easterly skies.
There as I stood by her side
My spirit grew happy and free;
Would I had said what I thought,
That none would I marry but thee.
The far-off bells were tolling,
For 'twas some one's funeral-day,
And in the meadows close by
The mowers were mowing the hay.

Into the garden I walked;
But once had I seen her before;
Vacant and still was the house,
Wide open was standing the door,
Then silent and listening I went
Up to the curtainless bed,
Where she lay shrouded in white,
All wintry, lonely, and dead;
There was a look on her face
As if she'd been thinking of me.
"Dear Margaret," then whispered I,
"None will I marry but thee!"
And the far-off bells were ringing,
For 'twas some one's wedding-day,
And in the meadows close by
The mowers were mowing the hay.

Silent and dark was yon lake,
As under the desolate hill,
Lit by no gleam from the sky,
It slumbered there, dreary and still,
Till, with its swallow-like wing,
The wind in its wandering flight
Touched into music the reeds,
And broke it in ripples of light.
Silent and dark was my heart,
Till suddenly thrilled by the tone
Tender and pure of the voice
Which told me I was not alone.
Yet how I long to be dead,
Whene'er, on a calm summer day,
The far-off bells are ringing,
And the mowers are mowing the hay!

ON THE THRESHOLD.

STANDING on the threshold,
With her wakening heart and mind,
Standing on the threshold,
With her childhood left behind;
The woman softness blending
With the look of sweet surprise
For life and all its marvels
That lights the clear blue eyes.

Standing on the threshold,
With light foot and fearless hand,
As the young knight by his armor
In minster nave might stand;
The fresh red lip just touching
Youth's ruddy rapturous wine,
The eager heart all brave, pure hope,
Oh, happy child of mine!

I could guard the helpless infant
That nestled in my arms:
I could save the prattler's golden head
From petty baby harms;

I could brighten childhood's gladness,
And comfort childhood's tears,
But I can not cross the threshold
With the step of riper years.

For hopes, and joys, and maiden dreams
Are waiting for her there,
Where girlhood's fancies bud and bloom
In April's golden air;
And passionate love, and passionate griefs,
And passionate gladness lie
Among the crimson flowers that spring
As youth goes fluttering by.

Ah! on those rosy pathways
Is no place for sobered feet,
My tired eyes have naught of strength
Such fervid glow to meet;
My voice is all too sad to sound
Amid the joyous notes
Of the music that through charmed air
For opening girlhood floats.

Yet thorns amid the leaves may lurk,
And thunder-clouds may lower,
And death, or change, or falsehood blight
The jasmine in the bower;
May God avert the woe, my child;
But o', should tempest come,
Remember, by the threshold waits
The patient love of home!

WILLY'S WIFE.

THE road is long and rough, you see,
Far stretching o'er the prairie;
And if his father went—why, I
Must stay and mind the dairy.
Perhaps an idle tear I dropped
To see him mount the filly,
And go alone to bless the bans
Of our dear boy, our Willy.

A week of days has passed since then,
Each longer than the other,
So strange it is to think he'd wed,
And I not there—his mother.
So strange, when he, a toddling thing,
Got all my care so freely;
Well, care and kisses wait to-day
For Willy's wife and Willy.

What's that you say? That I've not seen,
And so I may not love her,
Not love his love? Why troops of girls
Might lift their heads above her.
Ah, all the girls might fairer be,
In bloom of rose and lily;
But dearer than the best to me
Would be the wife of Willy.

'Tis true, he's young. 'Twere well, perhaps,
He'd waited just a little;
A lover's knot too early tied
May prove, alas! but brittle.
Yet old folks often make mistake
In thinking young folks silly,
And what's the use to question now?—
She's wife of my boy Willy.

Oh, ah! be sure, some other might
Have lined with gold his pocket;
But I have seen full many a stick
Dome down from costly rocket.
And yet—I hinted to the boy
His own short purse; and still he
But scorned the hint. Well, love's enough
To dower the wife of Willy.

For Willy, let me tell you now,
Is not the one to falter
In doing what an honest man
Has promised at the altar;
'Twill be no fault of idle ways
If later times prove chilly;
No need, I wis, for aught but love
With this young wife of Willy.

And that a wife brings love, I'm sure
Should make a mother kindly;
The mother, if she's wise at all,
Will scan a little blindly;
For smooth the ruts as smooth we may
Life's path will yet be hilly;
There's many a flint to prick the feet
Of even the wife of Willy.

So keep your doubts, no longer jest,
Because I'm anxious waiting
To clasp my darlings to my breast,
And bless their early mating.
I spake full loud to stay the match;
But now my finger stilly
Is placed upon my lip—since she
Is mine, the wife of Willy.

She's Willy's wife, and so she's mine,
My own dear, darling daughter;
If they're one flesh, they're but one blood,
And "blood is more than water."
Then hold your peace about the charms
Of Susan or of Milly;
I tell you, friends, she's best of all,
This wife of my boy Willy.

Lo! here they are, the precious pair!
My precious boy, my rover—
And with him one to crown his days;
Look! who could help but love her?
Come, father, shut the kitchen door,
The winds without blow shrilly,
But what care we, beside the fire,
With Willy's wife and Willy?

The bread is white upon the board,
The kettle bravely simmers,
The red flame dances up the wall
Where shining pewter shimmers;
The neighbors come and greetings bring
In welcome, "will he, nill he;"
Oh, happy day that light the home
With Willy's wife and Willy!

A RETURN.

"Do ye not know me, Donald?"
Pushing back her gray hair—
"Can you not speak to me, Donald
Me who was once so fair?

"Many years have gone over us—
Fortunate years for thee;
When I see thee they seem not so many—
Only when thou seest me.

"For I wear the snow of winters
No sun and no summer can change;
Yet I seem to hear the spring coming,
And the blue-bird beginning to range.

"As when in the old days together
We wandered and talked by the stream,
Of thy life in the far new country,
And our love. Was it all a dream?

"For what could I be to thee, Donald,
A man grown to honor and land,
With a choice of the whole world before thee—
While I could give thee but my hand!

"'Twas long that I stayed by the brookside,
In the dews and the dark of the eve,
Through winter and summer thereafter,
Ere I could forget to grieve.

"For thou wast my first love, Donald—
Thou the first love of my heart:
Why should I not tell thee, Donald,
What sadness it was then to part?"

"I can not recall thee, woman;
And yet, when I hear thy voice,
I hear the low rippling river,
I see the girl of my choice.

"Can ye not tell me of Janet,
Something of her I once loved?

She gave me a wing for my bonnet;
I gave her a ring ere I roved."

"Think ye on her sometimes, Donald?
Can ye remember the ring?
It is worn now very thin, Donald;
Yet, perhaps, ye'll remember the thing.

"It is here on my hand still, Donald;
I can not remove it again;
I have kept it through labor and sorrow;
It is grown now a part of my pain!"

AT NIGHTFALL.

COMING along by the meadows,
Just after the sun went down,
Watching the gathering shadows
Creep over the hillsides brown.

Coming along in the gloaming,
With never a star in the sky,
My thoughts went a-roaming, a-roaming
Through days that are long gone by.

Days when desire said, "To-morrow,
To-morrow, heart, we'll be gay!"
Days ere the heart heard the sorrow
Which echoes through yesterday.

Life was a goblet burnished,
That with love for wine was filled;
The cup is bruised and tarnished,
And the precious wine is spilled.

But to the traveler weary,
Just coming in sight of home,
What does it matter how dreary
The way whereby he has come?

Coming along by the meadows,
And watching the fading day,
Duskier than night's dusky shadows
Fell shadows of yesterday.

In the northern sunset's glimmer,
The Great Bear opened his eyes;
Low in the east a shimmer
Showed where the full moon would rise.

Lights in a window were gleaming,
And some one stood at the gate,
Said, "Why do you stand there dreaming?
And why are you home so late?"

Yesterday's shadows and sorrow
That moment all vanished away!
Here were to-day and to-morrow—
What matter for yesterday!

THE SECOND PLACE.

UNTO my loved ones have I given all:
The tireless service of my willing hands,
The strength of swift feet running to their call,
Each pulse of this fond heart whose love commands
The busy brain unto their use; each grace,
Each gift, the flower and fruit of life. To me
They give, with gracious hearts and tenderly,
The second place.

Such joy as my glad service may dispense
They spend to make some brighter life more blest;
The grief that comes despite my frail defense
They seek to soothe upon a dearer breast.
Love veils his deepest glories from my face;
I dimly dream how fair the light may be
Beyond the shade, when I hold, longingly,
The second place.

And yet 'tis sweet to know that though
I make
No soul's supremest bliss, no life
shall lie
Ruined and desolated for my sake,
Nor any heart be broken when I die.
And sweet it is to see my little space
Grow wider hour by hour; and grate-
fully
I thank the tender fate that granted me
The second place.

HEARTSEASE.

Of all the bonny buds that blow
In bright or cloudy weather,
Of all the flowers that come and go
The whole twelve moons together,
The little purple pansy brings
Thoughts of the sweetest, saddest
things.

I had a little lover once,
Who used to give me posies;
His eyes were blue as hyacinths,
His lips were red as roses—
And everybody loved to praise
His pretty looks and winsome ways.

The girls that went to school with me
Made little jealous speeches,
Because he brought me royally
His biggest plums and peaches,
And always at the door would wait
To carry home my books and slate.

"They couldn't see"—with pout and
fling—
"The mighty fascination
About that little snub-nosed thing
To win such admiration;
As if there weren't a dozen girls
With nicer eyes and longer curls."

And this I knew as well as they,
And never could see clearly
Why more than Marion or May,
I should be loved so dearly.
So once I asked him, why was this?
He only answered with a kiss.

Until I teased him—"Tell me why—
I want to know the reason;"
When from the garden-bed close by
(The pansies were in season)
He plucked and gave a flower to me,
With sweet and simple gravity.

"The garden is in bloom," he said,
"With lilies pale and slender,
With roses and verbenas red,
And fuchsias' purple splendor;
But over and above the rest,
This little heartsease suits me best."

"Am I your little heartsease, then?"
I asked with blushing pleasure;
He answered yes! and yes again—
Heartsease and dearest treasure;
That the round world and all the sea
Held nothing half so sweet as me.

I listened with a proud delight
Too rare for words to capture,
Nor ever dreamed what sudden blight
Would come to chill my rapture.
Could I foresee the tender bloom
Of pansies round a little tomb?

Life holds some stern experience,
As most of us discover,
And I've had other losses since
I lost my little lover;
But still this purple pansy brings
Thoughts of the saddest, sweetest
things.

"PAPA, PLEASE LET ME IN!"

A TIMID knock was at my door,
And restless feet were on the floor;

A soft sweet voice said, "Papa, please,
And little Jimmie will not tease."

I knew the presence waiting there,
The deep blue eyes, the nut-brown
hair.

Just now, the bolt upon him drawn,
He had been banished all forlorn;

For turning things all upside down,
While I was in a study brown.

His little hand touched everything,
His tongue put in such questioning;

That I could not command my thought,
And so I rose and turned him out.

He went without remonstrance cry,
But curled his lip so mournfully;

That courage cooled as I went back,
And somehow I was off the track.

Did I not know that, in his eyes,
My study was a paradise?

And there he stood beseechingly,
With voice so soft and sobbingly;

And so with show of discipline,
I rose and let my Jimmie in.

His dear red lips my cheek did press,
About my neck he flung caress.

"I'm sorry, papa; let me stay,
And I'll be good and still all day."

Then down with book upon the floor,
He sat and turned the pictures o'er.

And as he mused, he sweetly said,
"I wonder when the folks are dead,

And go to God, how long they stand,
Before our Father takes their hand;

And says to them, I'm glad you've
come,
To my nice warm and pretty home.

And is it long they have to wait,
Before God opens wide the gate?"

I told my boy the Lord would come,
Himself, to take His people home.

"And will He come for me, papa,
When I must leave you and mamma?
Oh, if He does, I'll thank Him so,
For He will know the way to go."

Two weeks had passed and little more,
Our Jimmie was at death's dark door,

He murmured sadly in his sleep,
And asked the Lord his "soul to keep."

"I'm knocking, papa, at the door;
Please let me in, I'll plague no more."

Then suddenly, with opened eyes,
That shone with sweet and glad sur-
prise:

"Oh, thank you, Jesus; you have come,
To take your little Jimmie home."

We closed his eyes, his work was done,
Our darling boy was from us gone.

O Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord,
We thank Thee for Thy precious word:

"Suffer the children, let them come,
For I will lead them to my home."

THE EVENING PRAYER.

ALL day the children's busy feet
Had pattered to and fro;
And all the day their little hands
Had been in mischief so—

That oft my patience had been tried;
But tender, loving care
Had kept them through the day from
harm,
And safe from ev'ry snare.

But when the even-tide had come,
The children went up-stairs,
And knelt beside their little beds,
To say their wonted prayers.

With folded hands and rev'rent mien,
"Our Father," first they say,
Then, "Now I lay me down to sleep,"
With childlike faith they pray.

With cheeks upon the pillow pressed,
They give a kiss, and say,—
"Good-night; we love you, dear mamma,
You've been so kind to-day."

"Dood-night; I love oo, too, mamma,"
And baby's eyelids close;
And tired feet and restless hands
Enjoy the sweet repose.

The trouble and the weariness
To me indeed seemed light,
Since love had thus my efforts crowned
To guide their steps aright.

And as I picked the playthings up,
And put the books away,
My heart gave grateful thanks to God,
For His kind care all day.

A STORY TOLD TO GRACIE.

ONE day in Summer's glow
Not many years ago,
A little baby lay upon my knee,
With rings of silken hair,
And fingers waxen fair,
Tiny and soft, and pink as pink could be.

We watched it thrive and grow,
Ah me! we loved it so—
And marked its daily gain of sweeter charms;
It learned to laugh and crow,
And play and kiss us—so—
Until one day we missed it from our arms.

In sudden, strange surprise,
We met each other's eyes,
Asking, "Who stole our pretty babe away?"
We questioned earth and air,
But, seeking everywhere,
We never found it from that summer day.

But in its wonted place
There was another face—
A little girl's with yellow curly hair
About her shoulders tossed,
And the sweet babe we lost
Seemed sometimes looking from her eyes so fair.

She dances, romps, and sings,
And does a hundred things
Which my lost baby never tried to do;
She longs to read in books,
And with bright, eager looks
Is always asking questions strange and new.

And I can scarcely tell,
I love the rogue so well,
Whether I would retrace the four-years' track,
And lose the merry sprite,
Who makes my home so bright,
To have again my little baby back.

Ah, blue-eyes! do you see
Who stole my babe from me,
And brought the little girl from fairy clime?
A gray old man with wings,
Who steals all precious things;
He lives forever, and his name is Time.

He rules the world, they say;
He took my babe away—
My precious babe—and left me in its place
This little maiden fair,
With yellow curly hair,
Who lives on stories, and whose name is Grace!

MOSS ROSES.

WHITE with the whiteness of the snow,
Pink with the faintest rosy glow,
They blossom on their sprays;
They glad the borders with their bloom,
And sweeten with their rich perfume
The mossy garden-ways.

The dew that from their brimming leaves
Drips down the mignonette receives,
And sweeter grows thereby;
The tall June lilies stand anear,
In raiment white and gold, and here
The purple pansies lie.

Warm sunshine glitters over all.
On daisied sward and ivied wall,
On lily, pansy, rose;
While flitting round each garden-bed,
With joyous laugh and airy tread,
A fairer sunbeam goes.

A little human blossom, bright
With childish, innocent delight
Of life yet in its dawn;
With sunshine prisoned in her hair,
Deep eyes unshadowed by a care,
She gambols on the lawn.

She checks the light, elastic tread,
And stays to hear, far overhead,
The lark's song to its close;
Eyes shaded by two tiny hands—
We pray God bless her as she stands,
Our little daughter Rose.

Yea, bless the Rose, dear God, since we
Have given the Lily back to thee
That bloomed with her awhile;
Yea, bless her deeply, doubly now
For her dear sake, whose angel brow
Reflects thine awful smile.

How often in her childish face
Our hungry, longing eyes can trace
The looks of one away;
How often in her merry tone
A music wakes, more sad than moan,
Of accents, hushed for aye!

God bless the child to blossom here,
Our clinging human hearts to cheer,
Till life has reached its close;
To grow in sweetest grace and bloom,
To beautify the dear old home,
Our precious daughter Rose!

WILL.

YOUR face, my boy, when six months old
We propped you laughing in a chair;
And the sun-artist caught the gold
Which rippled o'er your waving hair;
And deftly shadowed forth the while
That blooming cheek, that roguish smile,
Those dimples seldom still—
The tiny, wondering, wide-eyed elf!
Now can you recognize yourself
In this small portrait, Will?

I glance at it, then turn to you,
Where in your healthful ease you stand,
No beauty! but a lad as true
And pure as any in the land;
For nature through fair sylvan ways
Hath led and gladdened all your days,
Kept free from sordid ill—
Hath filled your veins with blissful fire,
And winged your instincts to aspire
Sunward and Godward, Will!

"Can this tall youth," I sometimes say,
"Be mine, *my* son?" It surely seems
Scarce farther backward than a day,
Since, watching o'er your feverish dreams
In that child-illness of the brain,
I thought—O Christ! with what keen pain,
Your pulse would soon be still.
That all your boyish sports were o'er,
And I—heart-broken—never more
Should call or clasp you, Will!

But Heaven was kind, death passed you by;
And now upon your arm I lead,
My *second self*—of clearer eye,
Of firmer nerve and sturdier mien—
In you, methinks, my long-lost youth
Revives, from whose sweet founts of truth

And joy I drink my fill.
I feel your every heart-throb—know
What inmost hopes within you glow—
One soul's between us, Will!

Pray Heaven that this be always so!
That ever on your soul and mine—
Though my thin locks grow white as snow—
The self-same radiant trust may shine.
Pray, that while this, my life, endures,
It aye may sympathize with yours,
In thought, aim, action, still,
That you, O son! (till comes the end)
In me may find your comrade, friend,
And *more* than father, Will!

SCHOOL-DAYS.

ONCE more by mount and meadow side
The merry bells are ringing;
Once more by vale and river wide
The school-room doors are swinging;
Forgotten books with pensive looks,
And slates come forth from cover,
For hand in hand to lesson-land
Go little lass and lover.

What meed of bliss were ours, my friend,
If we, like these, were able
Our cares and discontents to spend
In vanquishing a table—
If we could be so light and free
Amid our garnered pleasures,
As those who sweet the tale repeat
Of runic weights and measures!

Ah! children dear, our later days
Have brought us wise anointing;
We see in all your sunny ways
The Father's kind appointing;
Your morning-bell is ours as well—
We go to school to duty,
Whose brow severe from year to year
Wears fadeless wreaths of beauty.

THE AFTERTIME.

A WEE cot house abune the knowe,
A snod flower yaird wi' mony a posie,
Where lilacs bloom and myrtles grow
Beside a bower fu' snug and cozy;
'Twas there I woo'd my winsome May;
'Twas there I press'd her to my bosom,
When spring keeked oot frae bank and brae
In mony a bud and mony a blossom.

An auld kirk stands beside the stream
That wimples through the daisied meadow,
Where cowslips glint and lilies gleam
Beneath the spreading bourtree's shadow;
'Twas there I wed my bonny bride,
When Summer light was fain to linger;
'Twas there, while nestling at my side,
I placed the gowd ring on her finger.

A lonely kirk-yaird i' the glen,
Where mony a pearlie tear has fallen,
Where silence seals the strifes o' men,
Whate'er their rank, whate'er their callin'.
When Winter's blast piped i' the grove,
When lingering blooms had fa'n and perished,
'Twas there I laid my early love,
Beside a babe we baith had cherished.

But there's a lan' ayont the blue
That kens naught o' our kittle weather,
Where a' the leal and guid and true,
Though pairted lang, may yet forgather.
There sits she by the gowden gates—
For there I hae a tryst to meet her;
But love that strengthens while it waits
Maks a' the aftertime the sweeter.

POOR.

WHAT! poor you say? Why save you, friend,
I've more than half the world can show;
Such wealth as mine you can not boast,
Such bliss as mine you can not know,
I've more than keenest head can sum,
Could ever dream of night or day—
I've treasures hid from sordid hearts,
No cunning thief can take away.

My riches never bring distrust
Between me and my fellow-men;
No evil passion stirs my breast,
To yield me hate for hate again;
But pleasure, peace, and joy they bring;
They soothe my cares, they make me glad,
They give delight I can not name,
And buy me comfort when I'm sad.

Come here and open wide your eyes;
You see earth's glory at my feet,
You see the sky above my head;
The sunshine on my garden seat;
You see the love that lights my home,
The children round my cottage door—
The birds, the bees, the grass and flowers,
And you have dared to call me poor!

Come here and open wide your ears:
And hark the music morning makes,
When from the hills and from the woods
Her high and holy anthem breaks.
Come here, and catch the grand old songs
That nature sings me evermore—
The whisperings of a thousand things,
And tell me, tell me, am I poor?

Not rich is he, though wider far
His acres stretch than eyes can roll,
Who has no sunshine in his mind,
No wealth of beauty in his soul.
Not poor is he, though never known
His name in hall or city mart,
Who smiles content beneath his load,
With God and Nature in his heart.

RESCUED.

"LITTLE lad, slow wandering
Across the sands so yellow,
Leading safe a lassie small—
Oh, tell me, little fellow,
Whither go you, loitering
In the summer weather,
Chattering like sweet-voiced birds
On a bough together?"

"I am Robert, if you please,
And this is Rose, my sister,
Youngest of us all"—and he bent
His curly head and kissed her.
"Every day we come and wait
Here till the sun is setting,
Waiting for our father's ship,
For mother dear is fretting.

"Long ago he sailed away
Out of sight and hearing,
Straight across the bay he went,
Into sunset steering.
Every day we look for him,
And hope for his returning;
Every night my mother
Keeps the candle burning.

"Summer goes, and Winter comes,
And Spring returns, but never
Father's step comes to the gate.
Oh! is he gone forever?
The great grand ship that bore him off,
Think you some tempest wrecked her?"
Tears shone in little Rose's eyes,
Upturned to her protector.

Eagerly the bonny boy went on,
"Oh, sir, look yonder!
In the offing see the sails
That east and westward wander

Every hour they come and go,
The misty distance thronging,
While we watch and see them fade,
With sorrow and with longing."

"Little Robert! little Rose"
The stranger's eyes were glistening;
At his bronzed and bearded face
Up gazed the children, listening;
He knelt upon the yellow sand,
And clasped them to his bosom,
Robert brave, and little Rose,
As bright as any blossom.

"Father! Father! Is it you?"
The still air rings with rapture;
All the vanished joy of years
The waiting ones re-capture!
Finds he welcome wild and sweet,
The low thatched cottage reaching,
But the ship that into sunset steered,
Upon the rocks lies bleaching!

A PICTURE.

Two little souls, a boy and a girl,
Wandering on to the foot of the hill.
Bushes of green and blossoms of pearl
Laugh at themselves in the road-side rill.
Crossing the lane a gorgeous jay,
Bathed in the light of a flattering ray,
Jauntily chatters, "Some day, some day!"

Two sweet souls, a man and a maid,
(Beechen branches twisted above),
Picking the daisies which sprinkle a glade,
And trying their luck at a game of love.
"This year?" "Next year?" What do they say?
And out of the beeches the curious jay
Peeps and chuckles, "Some day, some day!"

Two old souls, and the end of the day
Follows them home to the foot of the hill;
One late gleam which has wandered astray,
Breaks from a copse and dimples the rill.
Autumn leaves are strewing the way,
And hoarse from the larch the hungry jay
Shouts out to the night, "Some day, some day!"

Two poor souls, in the dead of the night,
Side by side, lie stiffened and still;
And the winter's moon just softens her light,
As it solemnly rests at the foot of the hill,
Remembering the bees and the buds and the May,
The Summer gold and the Autumn gray,
And the warm, green lane where the beetles play.
In the crisp cold night the shivering jay
Croaks out of his dream, "Some day, some day!"

WHERE THE BLACKBIRD SINGS.

Down the quiet country road,
Before you reach the lofty ridge
Where the birch tree first awakened
To the morning's low breath swings,
I ofttimes sit in silence
On the small moss-covered bridge,
Near the little shady nook
Where the blackbird sings.

There the spreading trees meet o'er me,
And I hear no harsh voice calling,
Whilst his sweetness to my fancy's dream
A sacred feeling brings,
As it mingles with the rippling
Of the brook or pebbles falling
In the little shady nook
Where the blackbird sings.

There the ivy climbs the highest
Of the lofty trees beside me,
And the bluebell like a carpet
In the early Summer springs;
In the thorn I need but clamber,
And the snowy bloom would hide me
In the little shady nook
Where the blackbird sings.

There the trout his supper seeking,
In the sunny beam is leaping,
And the pool is brought to life again
In many glistening rings,
When the day seems growing fainter,
And the shadows onward creeping,
In the little shady nook
Where the blackbird sings.

There the swallows dart like spirits
Underneath the narrow arches,
And the air a sweetened perfume
Like the almond round me flings,
And I dream of holy quiet
As I watch the feathery larches
In the little shady nook
Where the blackbird sings.

Oh, if I could only tell you
What unbroken heart-felt pleasure
Ever waits me in this spot,
To which my thought so fondly clings,
You would follow me nor wonder
'Tis my only pleasant leisure,
By the little shady nook
Where the blackbird sings.

THE SUMMER.

Oh, happy are the children
On a pleasant summer day,
How it rests the weary worker
To watch them at their play!
See them running, jumping, dancing,
Hear them as they shout and sing,
While notes of perfect gladness
In their childish voices ring.

The waving grass of summer,
And its skies so softly blue,
And the flowers, so thickly springing,
Of loveliest form and hue,
And the birds, whose joyous music
Floats abroad from tree to tree—
All these make not the sweetness
Which summer brings to me.

But to see the little children,
As they gather up the flowers,
To hear them calling to the birds
Up in their leafy bowers,
To note with what untiring zeal
They dig the dusty road,
The ecstasy with which they greet
Each ugly "hoppy toad."

To see them stretched upon the grass
Beneath the maple-trees,
Telling of the wondrous things
Which a childish fancy sees,
Receiving all the grasshoppers,
And the caterpillars, too,
As their chosen friends and playmates,
Without the least ado.

Oh, this to me is summer,
And in this she speaks to me,
With accents low and gentle
And with tend'rest sympathy,
And I never can forget,
Howe'er busy be the day,
To look out through the window
On the children at their play.

TENDER MEMORIES.

The orchard blooms in red and white,
The meadow glows with blossoms fair;
The river runs a stream of light
Between its banks of beauty rare.
The homestead seems of heaven a part—
A little heaven here below,
Where only one is sad at heart—
The little girl that loves you so.

For now you roam through far-off lands—
The distant worlds beyond the sea;
O'er snow-crowned Alps, by shining sands,
Amid the dreams of Italy;
Through valleys of the Grecian State,
Where heroes reigned so long ago;
While here for you I sadly wait—
The little girl that loves you so.

Your letters tell of sunsets sweet
Beyond the Jordan's shrunken streams;
Of buried cities where the feet
Of Time seems caught in ancient dreams.
How, deified, in halls of art,
Love reigns the queen where'er you go,
And brings still nearer to your heart
The little girl that loves you so.

I know you think of me at times,
And long for rest, and love, and home;
My prayers, like old remembered rhymes,
Must follow you where'er you roam.
Ah! dearest, come what may to you—
Come grief or bliss, come joy or woe,
There's one whose every thought is true—
The little girl that loves you so.

THE MILK-MAID AND THE PAIL OF MILK.

Her milk pail on her head,
Perrette set out to town.
No heels her low shoes had,
Nor flounce nor train her gown;
And her step was light
On that morn so bright,
And her face had never a frown.

The milk, she said, I'll sell,
And its price for eggs will pay;
The nests, well filled, I'll guard
From harm by night and day;
And the brood once hatched,
Renard sly will be matched
By the watch that I'll keep alway.

In time I'll sell my chicks
And buy a pig instead;
The cost will not be much
To keep him housed and fed.
He'll grow fat in a trice
And will bring a good price,
When I sell him, living or dead.

What now shall me prevent
A goodly cow to buy?
Her calf shall leap beside;
Then who so rich as I?
Thereupon poor Perrette
Leaped too, and upset
All the milk that she carried so high.

Good-bye to cow and calf!
Good-bye to pig as well!
Good-bye, oh, nests and eggs!
With pail and milk ye fell!

The moral is plain
That castles in Spain
As doubtless you oft have heard tell,
Are charming and fair,
But are built in the air,
And therefore not wisely nor well.

CUDDLE DOON.

The bairnies cuddle doon at nicht,
Wi' muckle faucht an' din;
Oh, try an' sleep, ye waukrife rogues,
Your father's comin' in.
They never heed a word I speak;
I try to gie a froon,
But aye I hap them up an' cry,
"Oh bairnies, cuddle doon."

Wee Jamie wi' the curly heid—
He aye sleeps next the wa'—
Bangs up an' cries, "I want a piece;"
The rascal starts them a'.
I rin an' fetch them pieces, drinks,
They stop awee the soun';
Then draw the blankets up an' cry,
"Noo, weanies, cuddle doon."

But ere five minutes gang, wee Rab
Cries oot frae 'neath the claes,
"Mither, mak' Tam gie ower at ance—
He's kittlin' wi' his taes."
The mischief's in that Tam for tricks,
He'd bother half the toon:
But aye I hap them up an' cry,
"Oh, bairnies, cuddle doon."

At length they hear their father's fit,
An', as he steeks the door,
They turn their faces to the wa',
While Tam pretends to snore.
"Hae a' the weans been gude?" he asks,
As he pits off his shoon;
"The bairnies, John, are in their beds,
An' long since cuddled doon."

An' just afore we bed oorsel',
We look at oor wee lambs;
Tam has his arms roun' wee Rab's neck,
An' Rab his airms roun' Tam's.
I left wee Jamie up the bed,
An' as I straik each croon,
I whisper' till my heart fill up,
"Oh, bairnies, cuddle doon."

The bairnies cuddle doon at nicht,
Wi' mirth that's dear to me;
But sune the big warl's cark an' care
Will quaten doon their glee,
Yet come what will to ilka ane,
May He who sits aboon
Aye whisper, though their pows be bauld,
"Oh, bairnies, cuddle doon."

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL.

["I think the house beautiful; it is so full of remembrances."
"The slow, sweet hours that bring us all things good,
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil."—TENNYSON.]

I AM sitting beside my nursery fire,
Watching my children at play,
And my thoughts go back to the long, long years
Whose record is—passed away.

Yes, passed away is the echo I hear,
As I sit within this room,
And think of the lives of those loved ones dear
Who first made the house a home.

But these dumb old walls give no echo back,
They have kept their secret well,
Fond words have they heard while glad tears were shed,
But never a one they tell.

But there lingers about them a hallowing charm,
And I feel them dearer now,
As, folding my children within my arm,
I kissed each fair white brow.

I think of the time when I stood by your side,
To begin my life anew,
And we whispered low, till death us do part
We will be to each other true.

And through the years that have passed since then
Our lives have been richly blessed,
While our home was *hers*—'twas as if we had
Entertained an angel guest.

And what hearts were ours when first to my breast
I folded our baby girl,
Then another came, little Sunbeam bright,
Laughing eyes and flaxen curl.

And the dear old home is now ours alone!
As a trust it comes to me,
Yes, a sacred trust from those who are gone,
Ah! what shall *our* record be?

As sitting beside my nursery fire,
Watching my children at play,
I ask, Will they feel it a holy place,
When we, too, have passed away?

A CROWD OF BOYS.

We live in a bit of a cottage,
With rooms neither many nor wide;
Yet we're rich in possessions—at table
Our children count three on a side.
There are brown eyes and blue eyes and hazel,
And with various gifts they're endowed;
But the school-boys agree that our Benny
Is the jolliest boy in the crowd.

My neighbor who has only daughters,
Came in with her sewing one day,
And, while we were pleasantly chatting,
The children came in from their play.
She paused in the midst of a story,
Unused to hear voices so loud,
But smilingly added: "Your Benny
Is the noisiest boy in the crowd!"

Their Grandpa drops in of a morning,
And is often invited to stop,
To tell them some story or other,
Or mend up a wagon or top.
He is always amused at their sayings,
And seems of them all to be proud;
But he says, *sotto voce*, that Benny
Is the smartest of all in the crowd.

And Grandma, who dwells in the quiet,
Unmoved by earth's clamor and noise,
Comes in with her sweet, placid manners,
For an afternoon talk with the boys.
She sets them at peace, if a quarrel
Breaks over their joy like a cloud,
She is fond of them all; but thinks Benny
Is the prettiest one in the crowd.

Aunt Jane, from her stately old mansion,
O'ershadowed by poplar and elm,
Came down to the city last winter,
To visit my turbulent realm.
"I am glad," she assured me, at parting,
"Such blessings to you are allowed;
But keep a tight rein on that Benny,
He's the sauciest boy in the crowd!"

Ah me! what a mixed reputation
For any one boy to possess!
As the others have talents unnumbered,
We're a Babel, I frankly confess.
A philosopher asked to appraise them,
At the task would be puzzled and cowed,
Though at dinner might reason that Benny
Is the hungriest boy in the crowd.

At night, when they all have been settled
In crib and in cradle and bed,
I go on a tour of inspection
And pillow each slumbering head;
And, while I commend them to heaven,
With spirit in reverence bowed,
I am sure I can never determine
The dearest or best in the crowd.

AN AIR-CASTLE.

I built a house in my youthful dreams
In a sunny and pleasant nook,
Where I might listen, the whole day long,
To the voice of the gurgling brook;

A cottage with wide and airy rooms
And broad and shining floors—
A house with the hidden charms of home
And the freedom of out-of-doors.

Fair morning-glories climb and bloom
At will by the eastern eaves,
And on the doorstep and window-sill
The roses shake their leaves;
And fair old-fashioned lilacs toss
Their purple plumage high,
While honeysuckles drop their sweets
On every passer-by.

Down at the end of a pleasant path
Is a group of evergreen trees—
Pine and hemlock, and spruce and fir,
With their spicy fragrances;
And, sweetest picture of calm content
That mortal ever saw,
Under a low-boughed apple-tree
Is a bee-hive made of straw.

I have pictured it all a hundred times—
I shall do it a hundred more;
But I never shall own the pleasant home,
With the roses over the door.
Never a dream of mine came true—
It is Fate's unbending law;
I never shall see the apple-tree,
Nor the bee-hive made of straw.

But yet in the airy realm of dreams,
Where all my riches be,
I enter into the heritage
Which is else denied to me.
I have but to close my eyes to find
My Eden without a flaw—
The home, the garden, the apple-tree,
And the bee-hive made of straw.

A MUSIC LESSON ON THE BAG-PIPES.

FINGERS on the holes, Johnny,
Fairly in a row;
Lift this and then that,
And blow, blow, blow!

That's how to play, Johnny,
On the pipes sae shrill;
Never was the piper yet
But needed a' his skill.

And lang and sair he tried it, too,
Afore he won the knack
Of makin' bag and pipe gie
His very yearnin's back.
The echo to his heart-strings
Frae such a thing to come
Oh, is it no a wonder—
Like a voice frae out the tomb?

Be patient noo, my Johnny lad,
Ye mustna hurry thro'—
Take time and try it o'er again—
Sic a blast ye blew!
It's no alains by blowin' strong,
But eke by blowin' true,
That ye can mak' the music
To thrill folk thro' and thro'.

The weak folk and the learnin',
'Tis them that mak's the din;
But for the finished pipers
They count it as a sin;
And maybe it's the very same
A' the world thro'—
The learners' the very ones
That mak' the most ado!

Ye know the Southrons taunt us—
I sayna they're unfair—
About our squallin' music,
And their taunts have hurt me sair;
But if they'd heard a piper true
At night come o'er the hill,
Playin' up a pibroch
Upon the wind sae still;

Rising now, and falling,
And floating on the air,
The sounds come softly on ye
Almost ere ye're aware,
And fold themselves about the heart
That hasna yet forgot
The witchery of love and joy
Within some lonely spot—

I'm sure they wadna taunt us so,
Nor say the bagpipe's wild,
Nor speak o' squeakin' noises
Enough to deave a child;
They would say the bagpipe only
Is the voice of hill and glen;
And would listen to it sorrowing,
Within the haunts of men.

Fingers on the holes, Johnny,
Fairly in a row;
Lift this and then that,
And blow, blow, blow!
That's how to play, Johnny,
On the pipes sae shrill;
Never was the piper yet
But needed a' his skill.

AN OLD HAND.

BLUE-VEINED and wrinkled, knuckly and brown,
This good old hand is clasping mine;
I bend above it, and looking down,
I study its aspect, line by line.

This hand has clasped a thousand hands
That long have known no answering thrill;
Some have moldered in foreign lands—
Some in the graveyard on the hill.

Clasped a mother's hand, in the day
When it was little, and soft, and white—
Mother, who kissed it, and went away,
To rest till the waking in God's good light.

Clasped a lover's hand, years agone,
Who sailed away and left her in tears;
Under Sahara's torrid sun
Its bones have whitened years and years.

Clasped the hand of a good man true,
Who held it softly and fell asleep,
And woke no more and never knew
How long that impress this would keep.

Clasped so many, so many!—so few
That still respond to the living will,
Or can answer this pressure so kind and true!
So many, that lie unmoved and still!

Clasped, at last, this hand my own;
And mine will molder, too, in turn;
Will any clasp it when I am gone?
In vain I study this hand to learn!

THE OLD CLOCK.

OH, the old, old clock of the household stock,
Was the brightest thing and neatest;
Its hands, though old, had a touch of gold,
And its chimes rang still the sweetest.
'Twas a monitor, too, though its words were few,
Yet they lived, though nations altered;
And its voice, still strong, warned old and young,
When the voice of friendship faltered.
"Tick, tick," it said—"quick, quick to bed.
For ten I've given warning;
Up, up, and go, or else, you know,
You'll never rise soon in the morning."

A friendly voice was that old, old clock,
As it stood in the corner smiling,
And blessed the time with a merry chime,
The winter hours beguiling;
But a cross old voice was that tiresome clock,
As it called the daybreak boldly,

When the dawn looked gray on the misty way
And the early air blew coldly;
"Tick, tick," it said—"quick out of bed,
For five I've given warning;
You'll never have health, you'll never get wealth,
Unless you're up soon in the morning."

Still hourly the clock goes round and round,
With a tone that ceases never;
While tears are shed for bright days fled,
And the old friends lost forever;
Its heart beats on, though hearts are gone
That warmer beat and younger;
Its hands still move, though hands we love
Are clasped on earth no longer!
"Tick, tick," it said—"to the churchyard bed,
The grave hath given warning;
Up, up, and rise, and look to the skies,
And prepare for the heavenly morning."

THE HAPPY VILLAGE.

As often I pass the roadside,
When wearily falls the day,
I turn to look from the hill-top
At the mountains far away.

The red sun through the forests
Throws hither his parting beams,
And far in the quiet valley
The happy village gleams.

There the lamp is lit in the cottage
As the husbandman's labors cease,
And I think that all things are gathered
And folded in twilight peace.

But the sound of merry voices
Is heard in the village street,
While pleased the grandame watches
The play of the little feet.

And at night to many a fireside
The rosy children come:
To tales of the bright-eyed fairies
They listen and are dumb.

There seems it a joy forever
To labor and to learn,
For love, with an eye of magic,
Is patient to discern.

And the father blesses the mother,
And the children bless the sire,
And the cheer and joy of the hearthstone
Is as light from an altar fire.

Oh, flowers of rarest beauty
In that green valley grow!
And whether 'twere earth or heaven,
Why shouldst thou care to know?

Save that thy brow is troubled,
And dim is thy helpmate's eye,
And graves are green in the valley,
And the stars are bright in the sky.

A CLOSE, HARD MAN.

A HARD, close man was Solomon Ray,
Nothing of value he gave away;
He hoarded and saved;
He pinched and shaved;
And the more he had, the more he craved.

The hard-earned dollar he tried to gain
Brought him little but care and pain;
For little he spent,
And all he lent
He made it bring him twenty per cent.

Such was the life of Solomon Ray.
The years went by, and his hair grew gray;
His cheeks grew thin,
And his soul within
Grew hard as the dollar he worked to win.

But he died one day, as all men must,
For life is fleeting and men but dust.
The heirs were gay
That laid him away,
And that was the end of Solomon Ray.

They quarreled now who had little cared
For Solomon Ray while his life was spared.
His lands were sold,
And his hard-earned gold
All went to the lawyers, I am told.

Yet men will cheat, and pinch, and save,
Nor carry their treasures beyond the grave,
All their gold some day
Will melt away,
Like the selfish savings of Solomon Ray.

NOVEMBER.

WHEN thistle-blows do lightly float
About the pasture-height,
And shrills the hawk a parting note,
And creeps the frost at night,
Then hilly ho! though singing so,
And whistle as I may,
There comes again the old heart pain
Through all the livelong day.

In high wind creaks the leafless tree
And nods the fading fern;
The knolls are dun as snow-clouds be,
And cold the sun does burn.
Then ho, hollo! though calling so,
I can not keep it down;
The tears arise unto my eyes,
And thoughts are chill and brown.

Far in the cedars' dusky stoles,
Where the sere ground-vine weaves,
The partridge drums funereal rolls
Above the fallen leaves.
And hip, hip, ho! though cheering so,
It stills no whit the pain:
For drip, drip, drip, from bare branch-tip,
I hear the year's last rain.

So drive the cold cows from the hill,
And call the wet sheep in;
And let their stamping clatter fill
The barn with warming din.
And ho, folk, ho! though it is so
That we no more may roam,
We still will find a cheerful mind
Around the fire at home!

THE COW-BELLS.

ONE—in the distance, when the star came out
Over the dark green woods upon the hill—
One bell's low tinkle, and the farmer's shout,
While in the pauses sang the whip-poor-will.

Two, three, and more. She's coming now; but wait!
She stops. There's clover in yon tufts of fern.
Lightfoot! Coo-coo! Come down; the milking's late.
Robert, run up beyond the lane's quick turn.

Two little arms stretch out to clasp a cup
Of gentle Lightfoot's milk. "Come down, Coo-coo!
The farmer, tired with haying, wants to sup."
Hark! on the silent air the bell peals out anew.

There's silence now. She's at the hill-side spring,
Drinking with liquid, vacant eyes, her fill;
While upward flits on dreamy, bat-like wing
The somber, brooding, plaintive whip-poor-will.

Coo-coo! she's coming; hear her lulling bell!
Or does the farmer strike his empty glass

With pewter spoon. Perhaps in yonder dell
The bell is drowned amid the meadow's grass.

She's in her yard at last; the bell is still,
And she has done her peaceful work. Ah! me,
What if some higher spirits wait to fill
Their earthly longings from humanity!

THE REAPERS.

THE reapers bend their lusty backs;
Their sounding sickles sway;
At every stroke the golden sea
Recedes to give them way;
The heavy ears fall bowing down,
And nestle at their feet.
Such will, such work as theirs, perforce,
Must win—must homage meet.

So careless of fatigue they go,
So true, so steadily,
The admiring traveler on the road
Leans o'er the gate to see;
With marvel of the soon-fallen breadth,
The lounging gossips tell;
But the reapers labor for us all;
'Tis need they should work well.

Ere the great sun that burns above
Shall crimson in the west,
And the children's poppy nosegays fade,
And they lie down to rest,
Each golden spear that upward points
Each fall upon the field,
And the farmer drain a sparkling glass,
Rejoicing o'er the yield.

Ply, bonny men, your sickles bright,
And give the people bread!
At every conquering stride you take,
On want and woe you tread.
Drop, heavy ears, and give the strength
You gathered from this plain,
That man may rise refreshed and firm,
And do great things again.

God bless the hands all hard and brown,
That guide the cleaving plow,
That cast abroad the shining seed,
And build the wealthy mow;
They rear the bread our children eat;
'Tis by their toil we live;
Hurrah! give them the loudest cheer
That grateful hearts can give!

THE OLD FARM-GATE.

THE old farm-gate hangs, sagging down,
On rusty hinges, bent and brown;
Its latch is gone, and here and there
It shows rude traces of repair.

The old farm-gate has seen each year
The blossoms bloom and disappear;
The bright green leaves of spring unfold,
And turn to autumn's red and gold.

The children have upon it clung,
And in and out with rapture swung,
When their young hearts were good and pure—
When hope was fair and faith was sure.

Beside that gate have lovers true,
Told the old story always new;
Have made their vows, have dreamed of bliss,
And sealed each promise with a kiss.

The old farm-gate has opened wide
To welcome home the new-made bride,
When lilacs bloomed, and locusts fair,
With their sweet fragrance filled the air.

That gate, with rusty weight and chain,
Has closed upon the solemn train
That bore her lifeless form away,
Upon a dreary autumn day.

The lichens gray and mosses green
Upon its rotting posts are seen;
Initials, carved with youthful skill
Long years ago, are on it still.

Yet dear to me, above all things,
By reason of the thoughts it brings,
Is that old gate, now sagging down,
On rusty hinges, bent and brown.

THE OLD BARN.

RICKETY, old and crazy,
Shingleless, lacking some doors;
Bad in the upper story,
Wanting boards in the floors;
Beams strung thick with cobwebs,
Ridge-pole yellow and gray,
Hanging in helpless innocence
Over the mows of hay.

How the winds turned around it—
Winds of a stormy day—
Scattering the fragrant hay seed,
Whisking the straws away;
Streaming in at the crannies,
Spreading the clover smell,
Changing the dark old granary
Into a flowery dell.

Oh, how I loved the shadows,
That clung to the silent roof,
Day-dreams wove with the quiet,
Many a glittering woof;
I climbed to the highest rafters,
And watched the swallows at play,
Admired the knots in the boarding,
And rolled in the billows of hay.

Palace of king couldn't match it;
The Vatican loses its charm,
When placed in my memory's balance,
Beside the old gray barn!
And I'd rather scent the clover,
Piled in the barn's roomy mows,
Than sit in the breath of the highlands
Poured from Apennine prows!

THE PATCHWORK QUILT.

LIGHT and shadows rise and fall
In the room with the rosy-papered wall,
Room to me that is best of all.

Wind, lift up the muslin screen!
Let in the light that comes between
The maple leaves of shining green.

Fall soft upon the patchwork spread,
Quilt of blue and white and red,
Upon a carved old-fashioned bed.

Your worn-out squares are quilted through
With thoughts of all I used to do,
When I wore the dresses now in you.

I was a girl with braided hair,—
I think of the time I gave the tear,
The zigzag rent beyond repair,—

As I went through the fields a girlish rover,
In dress of white all dotted over
With sprigs of wheat, and sprays of clover.

Oh, dress! that once was mine to wear,
Your clover blooms are scattered there
In the pink and white of that patchwork square.

Wind, lift up the muslin screen!
Let in the light that comes between
The maple leaves of shining green.

Fall soft upon the patchwork spread;
For a little child that now is dead,
Sewed your squares of white and red.

One summer's day she wrought in you,
And left her needle half-way through,
With a knotted, twisted thread of blue.

Before she slept that summer's night,
She laid away, and out of sight,
Your folded squares of red and white.

She sought for blooms that fadeless grow,
And left for other hands to sew
The clover blossoms here below.

And still the light through windows small,
Throws shadows on the rosy wall,
On the quaint old-fashioned bedstead tall;

And falls in waving bars of gold
Across each faded, wrinkled fold
Of clover blossoms growing old;

While into Life's great patchwork square,
With knotted threads of thought and care,
I sew my dreams and fancies fair.

When night shall deeper shadows throw,
I will leave my work, and softly go
To seek for blooms that fadeless grow.

What matters it? I will not grieve,
If other hands shall interweave
And smooth the tangled threads I leave.

Beyond the dark, in fields of bliss,
I'll gather flowers, and will not miss
The clover blossoms left in this.

I will backward look through all the shade,
To see in full completeness laid
The patchwork squares that I have made.

THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

A WHITE pine floor and low-ceiled room,
A wheel and a reel and a great brown loom,
The windows out and the world in bloom—

A pair of "swifts" in the corner, where
The grandmother sat in her rush-wrought chair,
And pulled at the distaff's tangled hair;

And sang to herself as she spun the tow
While "the little wheel" ran as soft and low
As muffled brooks where the grasses grow
And lie one way with the water's flow.

As the Christ's field lilies free from sin,
So she grew like them when she ceased to spin,
Counted her "knots" and handed them in.

"The great wheel" rigged in its harness stands—
A three-legged thing with its spindle bands—
And the slender spokes, like the willow wands
That spring so thick in the low, wet lands,
Turn dense at the touch of a woman's hands.

As the wheel whirls swift, how rank they grow!
But how sparse and thin when the wheel runs slow
Forward and backward and to and fro!

There's a heap of rolls like clouds in curl,
And a bright-faced, springy, barefoot girl;
She gives a touch and a careless whirl.

She holds a roll in her shapely hand
That the sun has kissed and the wind has fanned,
And its mate obeys the wheel's command.

There must be winds on her rosy heel!
And there must be bees in the spindled steel!
A thousand spokes in the dizzy wheel!

Have you forgotten the left-breast knock
When you bagged the bee in the hollyhock,
And the angry burr of an ancient clock,

All ready to strike, came out of the mill,
Where covered with meal the rogue was still,
Till it made your thumb and finger thrill?

It is one, two, three—the roll is caught:
'Tis a backward step and the thread is taut,
A hurry of wheel and the roll is wrought!

'Tis one, two, three, and the yarn runs on,
And the spindle shapes like a white-pine cone,
As even and still as something grown.

The barefoot maiden follows the thread
Like somebody caught and tether'd and led
Up to the buzz of the busy head.

With backward sweep and willowy bend
Monarch would borrow if maiden could lend,
She draws out the thread to the white wool's end.

From English sheep of the old-time farm,
With their legs as fair as a woman's arm,
And faces white as a girl's alarm.

She breaks her thread with an angry twang
Just as if at her touch a harp-string rang
And keyed to the quaint old song she sang

That came to a halt on her cherry lip,
While she tied one knot that never could slip,
And thought of another, when her ship—

All laden with dreams in splendid guise—
Should sail right out of the azure skies
And a lover bring with great brown eyes!

Ah, broad the day but her work was done—
Two "runs" by reel! She had twisted and spun
Her two-score "knots" by set of sun.

With her one, two, three the wheel beside,
And the three, two, one, of her backward glide,
Till the bees went home and daytime died!

In apron white as the white sea foam,
She gathered the wealth or her velvet gloom,
And railed it in with a tall back-comb;

She crushed the dew with her naked feet,
The track of the sun was a golden street,
The grass was cool and the air was sweet.

The girl gazed up at the mackerel sky,
And it looked like a pattern lifted high;
But she never dreamed of angels nigh.

And she spoke right out: "Do just see there!
What a blue and white for the clouded pair
I'm going to knit for Sunday wear!"

The wheel is dead and the bees are gone,
And the girl is dressed in a silver lawn,
And her feet are shod with a golden dawn.

From a wind-swung tree that waves before,
A shadow is dodging in the door—
Flickering ghost on the white pine floor—

And the cat, unlearned in the shadow's law,
Just touched its edge with a velvet paw
To hold it still with an ivory claw!

But its spectral cloak is blown about,
And a moment more and the ghost is out,
And leaves us all in shadowy doubt.

If ever it fell on floor at all,
Or if ever it swung along the wall
Or whether a shroud or a phantom shawl!

Oh, brow that the old-time morning kissed
Good-night, my girl of the double and twist,
Oh, barefoot vision! Vanishing mist!

THE FISHERMAN'S FUNERAL.

UP on the breezy headland
The fisherman's grave they made,
Where over the daisies and clover bells,
The birchen branches swayed;
Above us the lark was singing
In the cloudless skies of June,
And under the cliffs the billows
Were chanting their ceaseless tune:
For the creamy line was curving
Along the hollow shore,
Where the dear old tides were flowing
That he would ride no more.

The dirge of the wave, the note of the bird,
And the priest's low tones were blent
In the breeze that blew from the moorland,
All laden with country scent;

But never a thought of the new-mown hay
Tossing on sunny plains,
Or of lilies deep in the wildwood,
Or roses gemming the lanes,
Woke in the hearts of the stern, bronzed men
Who gathered around the grave
Where lay the mate who had fought with them
The battle of wind and wave.

How boldly he steered the coble
Across the foaming bar,
When the sky was black to the eastward
And the breakers white on the Scar!
How his keen eye caught the squall ahead,
How his strong hand furled the sail,
As we drove o'er the angry waters
Before the raging gale!
How cheery he kept all the long dark night;
And never a parson spoke
Good words, like those he said to us
When at last the morning broke!

So thought the dead man's comrades
As silent and sad they stood,
While the prayer was prayed, the blessing said,
And the dull earth struck the wood;
And the widow's sob, and the orphan's wail,
Jarred through the joyous air;
How could the light wind o'er the sea
Blow on so fresh and fair?
How could the gay waves laugh and leap
Landward o'er sand and stone,
While he, who knew and loved them all,
Lay lapped in clay alone?

But for long, when to the beetling heights
The snow-tipped billows roll,
When the cod, and skate, and dogfish
Dart around the herring shoal:

When gear is sorted, and sails are set,
And the merry breezes blow,
And away to the deep-sea harvest,
The stalwart reapers go,
A kindly sigh, and a hearty word,
They will give to him who lies
Where the clover springs, and the heather blooms
Beneath the northern skies.

A PICTURE AND A PARABLE.

An old-time ingle, warm and wide,
Shaming our modern manners,
Where backwood monarch, side by side,
Fling up their rival banners,
And sent their gleaming cohorts fast
The flying shadows after,
Till warmth and comfort glow at last
From shining floor to rafter;
Now glittering in the silver store
Of heirlooms with a story,
Now weaving saintly halos for
The elder's crown of glory;
But tenderest the fire-light glows,
And merriest is glancing
Upon a boy with cheek of rose,
In baby frolic dancing
About a loving father's knee,
Whose brow of care unbending
To join in all the baby glee
Is father's fondness lending;
While, with her loving smile for all,
The gentle household mother
Moves queenly through her kingdom small,
Nor longs for any other,
But muses, in a happy way,
Whether on earth there may be
Another such papa to play
Bo-peep with such a baby.
Full well the picture I recall
My childish fancy greeted,
And which the scene that most of all
I liked to have repeated:
How, when his father's hiding-place
The boy could not discover,
A while he stood with puzzled face
Thinking the matter over,
Then stooped with sudden roguery
And airs of mock confiding,
And peeped beneath a chip to see
If there papa was hiding;
And how the trick brought papa out
With sudden peal of laughter,
And joyous was the baby's shout,
And wild the frolic after.

And still my fancy lingers in
The pretty, childish story,
And thinks a deeper sense to win,
As from an allegory;
For what do we with childish wits—
More witless children rather—
Seeking beneath our chips and bits
Of truth to find the Father—
"Lo here, lo there"—when everywhere
His walls of home do hold us,
The warmth and love-light of his care
By day and night infold us?
And when we lay us down to sleep,
And scenes of earth forsake us,
His presence still our souls shall keep,
His morning kiss shall wake us.
Does not the Father's pity yearn
To comfort them that fear Him,
Until within His arms they learn
That they are always near Him?

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

There's a little face at the window
And two dimpled hands on the pane;
And somebody's eyes are fixed upon
The gate at the end of the lane.

The hills have caught the shadow
Which heralds the coming night,
And the lane, with its flowering fringe, grows dim
To the watcher's anxious sight.

Where, half way down,
Like a glittering crown,
A fire-fly band have clustered
round an aster's leaf—
A royal chief—
A driven herd are mustered.

Away behind,
With busy mind,
But a step that is light and free,
And a sun-burnt face
On which the trace
Of a hard day's work you see,

Comes the farmer home from toil,
Driving the cows before him;
And the child-eyes strained at the window there,
Were the first in the house that saw him.

Ah! would, when the day is done
And I leave my cares behind me,
I could have such a pair of winsome eyes
Searching the night to find me!

MISCHIEF-MAKERS.

Oh! could there in this world be found
Some little spot of happy ground,
Without the village tattling!
How doubly blest that spot would be
Where all might dwell in liberty,
Free from the bitter misery,
Of gossip's endless prattling.

If such a spot were really known,
Dame Peace might call it all her own,
And in it she might fix her throne,
Forever and forever.
There like a queen might reign and live,
While every one would soon forgive
The little slights they might receive,
And be offended never.

'Tis mischief-makers that remove
Far from our hearts that warmth of love,
And lead us all to disapprove
What gives another pleasure;
They seem to take one's part—but when
They've heard our cares, unkindly then
They soon retail them out again,
Mixed up with poisonous measure.

And then they've such a cunning way
Of telling ill-meant tales; they say,
"Don't mention it, I pray,
I would not tell another:"
Straight to your neighbors then they go,
Narrating everything they know;
And break the peace of high and low,
Wife, husband, friend, and brother.

Oh! that the mischief-making crew
Were all reduced to one or two,
And they were painted red or blue,
That every one might know them!
Then would our villagers forget
To rage and quarrel, fume and fret,
And falling into an angry pet
With things so much below them.

For 'tis a sad degrading part
To make another's bosom smart,
And plant a dagger in the heart
We ought to love and cherish.
Then let us evermore be found
In quietness with all around,
While friendship, joy, and peace abound
And angry feelings perish.

UNDER THE MAPLE.

The start it gave me just now to see,
As I stood in the door-way looking out,
Rob Greene at play by the maple-tree,
Throwing the scarlet leaves about!

It carried me back a long, long way;
Ten years ago—how the time runs by!
There was nobody left at home that day
But little Jimmy and father and I.

My husband's father, an old, old man,
Close on to eighty, but still so smart:
It was only of late that he began
To stay in the house and doze apart.

But the fancy took him that afternoon
To go to the meadow to watch the men;
And as fast as I argued, just so soon
He went right over it all again;

Till, seeing how set he seemed to be,
I thought, with the air so warm and still,
It could not hurt him to go with me
And sit for a little under the hill.

So, lending my arm to his feeble tread,
Together slowly we crossed the road,
While Jim and his cart ran on ahead
With a heap of pillows for wagon load.

We made him a soft seat, cushioned about,
Of an old chair out of the barn close by;
Then Jim went off with a caper and shout,
While we sat silent, father and I.

For me, I was watching the men at work,
And looking at Jack, my oldest son—
So like his father! he never would shirk,
But kept straight on till the stint was done.

Seventeen was Jack that last July:
A great stout fellow, so tall and strong!
And I spoke to the old man by and by,
To see how fast he was getting along.

But father had turned away his head,
A-following Jimmy's busy game
With the maple leaves, whose bloody red
Flared up in the sun like so much flame.

His lips, as he looked, began to move,
And I heard him mutter a word or two:

"Yes, Joe! A fire in the Weston grove?
Just wait—one minute—I'll go with you!"

"Why, father," I cried, "what do you mean?"
For I knew he talked of his brother Joe,
The twin that was drowned at scarce fifteen,
Sixty summers and more ago.

"The sun has dazzled you: don't you see
That isn't a fire a-blazing there?
It's only Jim, by the maple-tree,
Tossing the red leaves into the air."

But still he nodded and looked and smiled,
Whispering something I could not hear;
Till, fairly frightened, I called the child,
Who left his play and came frolicking near.

The old man started out of his seat:
"Yes, Joe, yes; I'm coming," said he.
A moment he kept his tottering feet
And then his weight grew heavy on me.

"Father!" I screamed; but he did not mind,
Though they all came running about us then:
The poor old body was left behind,
And the twins were young together again.

And I wonder sometimes, when I wake at night,
Was it his eyes or my own were dim?
Did something stand beyond my sight,
Among the leaves, and beckon to him?

Well, there comes Jim up the interval road;
Ten summers ago? yes, all of ten:
That's Baby Jack on the pumpkin load,
And Jim is as old as Jack was then.

WE CAN MAKE HOME HAPPY.

THOUGH we may not change the cottage
For a mansion tall and grand,
Or exchange a little grass-plat
For a boundless stretch of land—
Yet there's something brighter, dearer,
Than the wealth we'd thus command.

Though we have no means to purchase
Costly pictures, rich and rare—
Though we have no silken hangings
For the walls so cold and bare—
We can hang them o'er with garlands,
For flowers bloom everywhere.

We can always make home cheerful,
If the right course we begin;
We can make its inmates happy,
And their truest blessings win;
It will make the small room brighter
If we let the sunlight in.

We can gather round the fireside
When the evening hours are long;
We can blend our hearts and voices
In a happy social song;
We can guide some erring brother,
Lead him from the path of wrong.

We may fill our home with music,
And with sunshine brimming o'er,
If against all dark intruders
We will firmly close the door—
Yet should evil shadows enter,
We must love each other more.

There are treasures for the lowly
Which the grandest fail to find;
There is a chain of sweet affection
Binding friends of kindred mind—
We may reap the choicest blessings
From the poorest lot assigned.

HOME AGAIN.

HOME again; mother, your boy will rest
For a time, at least, in the old home nest.
How good to see you in your cornered nook
With knitting, or sewing, or paper, or book,
The same sweet mother my boyhood knew,
The faithful, the patient, the tender and true.

You have little changed; ah, well maybe
A few gray hairs in the brown I see;
A mark or two, under smiling eyes,
So lovingly bent in your glad surprise;
'Tis I who have changed; ah, mother mine,
From a teasing lad, to manhood's prime.

No longer I climb on your knee at night
For a story told in the soft firelight;
No broken slate or book all torn,
Do I bring to you with its edges worn:
But I'll come to you with my graver cares,
You'll help me bear them with tender prayers.

I'll come again as of old—and you
Will help the man to be brave and true;
For the man's the boy, only older grown,
And the world has many a stumbling stone.
Ah, mother mine, there is always rest
When I find you here in the old home nest.

ON THE STAIRWAY.

THE little children on the stairway,
Cased in a slippery glare of sleet,
By post and railing vainly clamber—
Slight hold is there for baby feet.

High in the cold air swings the school-bell,
"Come up! come up!" its clang commands;
A quick thought flies from lips to fingers,
"'Tis easier taking hold of hands."

Low laughter lights their rosy faces;
Stout arms the faltering strugglers lift;
Now all at last have won the threshold,
And out of sight within they drift,
Flinging back bloom upon the snow-wreaths;
The blank, white world reflects their smile;
Their word has cleared for us a pathway,
Though Alps of ice the high-road pile.

We all are children on a stairway,
Weary of vain attempts to climb,
Or, strong ourselves, forgetting others—
While silver peals of Duty chime
High in the echoing heaven above us,
And, welcome we or dread the call,
Upon the steps we may not linger—
Ascend we must, slide back, or fall.

Whose is the fault if this one stumbles?
If that laments a hopeless bruise?
Or if any other sits despairing?
Yours, mine, who timely aid refuse,
Small honor to go up unhindered
While a tired brother by us stands;
The little children, they shall teach us,
"'Tis easier taking hold of hands."

Still up and down on Virtue's ladder
Unnumbered beings come and go,
With faces turned to nether darkness,
Or sunned with a celestial glow.
The truants out of Duty's heaven,
The white and dazzling seraph-bands,
Are brethren still; and, struggling upward,
"'Tis easier taking hold of hands."

"NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP."

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep"—
So the baby learned her prayer
Kneeling by her mother's chair;
In her little bed-gown white,
Said it over every night;
Learning, in her childish way,
How a little child could pray.

"Now I lay me down to sleep"—
Said the child a maiden grown:
Thinking, with a backward glance,
How the happy past had flown,
Since, beside her mother's knee,
With a child's humility,
She had said her simple prayer,
Feeling safe in Jesus' care.

"I pray the Lord my soul to keep"—
Yet the words were careless said:
Lightly had the hand of Time
Laid his fingers on her head;
On Life's golden afternoon
Gay the bells and sweet the tune,
And upon her wedding-day
She had half forgot to pray.

"Now I lay me down to sleep"—
How the words come back again,
With a measure that was born
Half of pleasure, half of pain:
Kneeling by a cradle bed,
With a hand upon each head,
Rose the old prayer, soft and slow,
As a brooklet in its flow.

All alone, with bended head,
She has nothing but her dead;
Yet with heart so full of care,
Still her lips repeat the prayer;
Rest at last! oh, storm-tossed soul!
Safe beyond the breakers' roll:
He, the Lord, her soul shall keep,
Now she lays her down to sleep.

A CHILD'S FACE AT THE WINDOW.

I COULD not comprehend
The preacher nor his text;
I walked with downcast head,
And brooded thoughts perplext.
In things too deep for me
My footing soon I lost,
'Twixt doubt and faithless cavil
Swaying wind-blown and tossed.

At last my eyes I lifted;
A face looked down at me,
A child's face at the window;—
Could there evangel be
More swift? ashamed I said,
And must I so forget
That lesson old, the child
Who in the midst was set?

As innocent and simple,
As fearless, if I'd be,
Quiet-behaved I'd fret not,
Nor start, at mystery.
The child's face at the window
Shall, like a masterpiece,
Be, henceforth, mine to copy;
O Lord, my skill increase!

EVENING HYMN.

CLOSE, little weary eyes,
The day at last is over;
To-night no more surprise
Shall they discover.
Nor bird, nor butterfly,
Nor unfamiliar flower,
Nor picture in the sky,
Nor fairy in the bower.

Rest, little weary feet,
The woods are dark and lonely;
The little birds rest sweet,
The owl is watching only;
No buttercup is seen,
Nor daisy in the meadow;
Their gold, and white, and green
Are turned to purple shadow.

Fold, little busy hands,
Day is the time for doing;
The boats lie on the sands,
The mill-wheels are not going.
Within the darksome mine
Are hushed the spade and hammer;
The cattle rest supine,
The cock withholds his clamor.

Still, little restless heart,
Be still until the morrow;
Till then thou hast no part
In either joy or sorrow.
To new and joyous day
Shall little birds awake thee;
Again to work and play,
With strength renewed betake thee.

LEARNING TO PRAY.

KNEELING fair in the twilight gray,
A beautiful child was trying to pray;
His cheek was on his mother's knee,
His little bare feet half hidden,
His smile still coming unbidden,
And his heart brimful of glee.

"I want to laugh. Is it naughty? Say!
Oh mamma! I've had such fun to-day,
I hardly can say my prayers.
I don't feel just like praying;
I want to be outdoors playing,
And run all undressed down-stairs.

"I can see the flowers in the garden-bed,
Shining so pretty, and sweet, and red,
And Sammy is swinging, I guess.
Oh! everything is so fine out there,
I want to put it all in my prayer,
Do you mean I can do it by 'Yes!'

"When I say 'Now I lay me,' word for word,
It seems to me as if nobody heard,
Would 'Thank you, dear God,' be-right?
He gave me a mamma,
And papa, and Sammy—
Oh, mamma, you nodded I might."

Clasping his hands and hiding his face,
Unconsciously yearning for help and for grace,
The little one now began.
His mother's nod and sanction
Had led him close to the dear Lord's feet,
And his words like music ran.

"Thank you for making this home so nice,
The flowers, and folks, and my two white mice,
(I wish I could keep right on)
I thank you, too, for every day,
Only I'm most too glad to pray;
Dear God, I'm done.

"Now, mamma, rock me — just a minute—
And sing the hymn with 'darling' in it;
I wish I could say my prayers!
When I get big I know I can.
Oh! won't it be nice to be a man,
And stay all night down-stairs?"

The mother singing, clasping him tight,
Kissing and cooing a fond "Good-night,"
Had treasured his every word;
For well she knew the artless joy
And love of her precious, innocent boy,
Were a prayer that her Lord had heard.

AUNT POLLY'S ADVICE.

If things go wrong in the household
(As they often will, you know),
Or you're worried out with cares that vex,
And the children try you so;
Don't sit in the vale of shadows,
Or stoop to be a scold;
'Twill only make bad worse, you see,
While you grow gray and old.

I know how things will bother,
While work seems mountain high,
And the adding of a feather's weight
Makes you feel as if you'd die;
And then perhaps your husband
Says something quite unkind,
(He has his worries, too, poor man),
So pray, then, never mind.

A sharp retort is best unsaid,
Though censure's hard to bear;
But John may think you're most to blame
If you his spirit share.
Then keep your temper, gentle Nell,
Just do the best you can;
And by and by God will unfold
The secret of His plan.

I've had my troubles, too, dear Nell,
And many and many a day,
If the Lord had not been with me,
I'd have fainted by the way.
Then let Faith fold her brooding wing
O'er all your doubts and fears,
And God will give thee needed strength
For all the coming years.

ROWING AGAINST THE TIDE.

It is easy to glide with its ripples,
Adown the stream of time,
To flow with the course of the river,
Like music to some old rhyme;
But, ah! it takes courage and patience,
Against its current to ride,
And we must have strength from Heaven,
When rowing against the tide.

We may float on the river's surface,
While our oars scarce touch the stream,
And visions of earthly glory
On our dazzled sight may gleam;
We forget that on before us
The dashing torrents roar,
And while we are idly dreaming,
Its waters will carry us o'er.

But a few—ah! would there were many—
Row up the "Stream of Life,"
They struggle against its surges,
And mind neither toil nor strife;
Though weary and faint with labor,
Singing triumphant they ride,
For Christ is the hero's captain
When rowing against the tide.

Far on through the hazy distance,
Like the mist on a distant shore,
They see the walls of a city,
With its banners floating o'er.
Seen through a glass so darkly,
They almost mistake their way;
But Faith throws light on their labor
When darkness shuts out their day.

And shall we be one of that number,
Who mind not toil nor pain?
Shall we moan the loss of earth's pleasures,
When we have a crown to gain?
Or shall we glide on with the river,
With Death at the end of the ride,
While our brother, with Heaven before him,
Is rowing against the tide?

THE MOTHER WANTS HER BOY.

THERE'S a homestead waiting for you, my boy,
In a quaint old-fashioned town;
The gray moss clings to the garden wall,
And the dwelling is low and brown;
But a vacant chair by the fireside stands,
And never a grace is said;
But a mother prays that her absent son
Soon may be homeward led,
For the mother wants her boy.

She trains the vines and tends the flowers,
For she says, "My boy will come;
And I want the quiet, humble place
To be just the dear old home
That it seemed when he, a gentle lad,
Used to pluck the orchard's gold,
And gather of roses and lilies tall,
Far more than his hands could hold,
And still I want my boy."

How well she knows the very place,
When you played at bat and ball:
And the violet cap you wore to school,
Still hangs on its hook in the hall;
And when the twilight hour draws near
She steals adown the lane
To cosset the lambs you used to pet,
And dream you were home again;
For the mother wants her boy.

She is growing old, and her eyes are dim
With watching day by day,
For the children nurtured at her breast
Have slipt from her arms away;
Alone and lonely, she names the hours
As the dear ones come and go:
Their coming she calls "The time of flowers!"
Their going, "The hours of snow!"
And ever she wants her boy.

Walk on, toil on; give strength and mind
To the task in your chosen place;
But never forget the dear old home,
And the mother's loving face!
You may count your blessings score on score,
You may heap your golden grain,
But remember when her grave is made,
Your coming will be in vain,
And *now* she wants her boy.

MY OLD SILVER THIMBLE.

THE old silver thimble I've worn for years,
How much it has helped me to do!
In mending the rents in little ones' clothes,
Or making them clothes that were new.

At morn it has shone on my finger,
When the dew still sprinkled the flowers,
And has taken the gleam of the lamplight
'Mid latest of night's quiet hours.

It helped me to fashion the trousers
Which Johnnie was proud to display,
And the fairy-like dresses that clung to
The delicate form of dear May.

In the dark room it quietly glittered,
When our sweet little baby lay dead;
Whilst it pressed in the needle that broidered
The tiny lace cap for its head.

And again, in the time of a bridal,
'Twas ready to help us its best,
In forming the robes of the birdling
Then leaving the warm parent nest.

And so it has proven trustworthy
For what it was called on to do,
No flaws have come o'er its clear surface,
Its silver is sterling and true.

And though for the "latest invention,"
That takes up the stitches so fast,
It is sometimes unused and neglected,
'Tis bright as it was in the past.

If we, who have souls in our bodies,
Were staunch as this thimble has been,
On earth would be more of God's people,
And less of corruption and sin.

Then, standing at last with freed spirits,
At the great gates of jasper and gold,
The angels would warmly inclose us
In God's ever-glorious fold.

"IN THE GARRET ARE OUR BOYS."

HERE I'm sitting, stitching, darning
Little stockings, toes and heels,
While above my head the racket
Sounds like distant thunder-peals.
What on earth can mean this tumult,
Whence comes this distracting noise?
Ah, I know it; yes, I hear them,—
"In the garret are our boys."

There is Grayson, "dead in earnest,"
Wanting things to go "just so;"
Banging all the boards together,
Placing boxes in a row;
"Make believe" his having auction,
Selling worn-out broken toys.
Do you wonder at the clatter?
"In the garret are our boys."

Now the barrel from the corner
Fast is rolling o'er and o'er,
And the croquet balls are bounding
Here and there across the floor.
"Seize a mallet," "quick," "get ready,"
"There's your ball," "*here* mine goes,"
"I can beat you if I try it,"
"I can strike the hardest blows."

Hark, a shout of merry laughter—
Hammond's joyful, jolly glee!
"Brother, don't you see I'm beating?
Better clear the track for me."
Bang, bang, bang! Oh, *dear*, 'tis deafening,
Have you ever heard this noise?
Not unless you are the mother
Of just three such darling boys.

Now I hear a shout from Milton—
He's the youngest of the three—
"Oh, that's nothing, if I missed it,"
"Take care, brother, don't hit me."
"Mamma, *mamma!* call to Beamie,"*
"Here's my book and there's my ball,"

* "Beamie" is a pet name given to Hammond.

"*Let me be*, or I'll go tell her,
Mamma, Beamie made me fall."

Yes, I'm sitting, stitching, mending
Pants and jackets, quite a sight;
Need I grieve o'er countless stitches,
If they cover hearts all right?
Should the bustle in the garret
E'er disturb my sweetest joys,
If my heart is yearning heavenward,
For the welfare of our boys?

If when years have brought them manhood,
And the broad world is their field;
When this heart that so much loves them,
Its *first place* is forced to yield;
When I ponder o'er the bygones,
Will these days be reckoned joys?
Will I wish that I could say then,
"In the garret are our boys?"

STILL DAY IN AUTUMN.

I LOVE to wander through the woodland hoary,
In the soft gloom of an autumnal day,
When summer gathers up her robes of glory,
And, like a dream of beauty, glides away.

How through each loved, familiar path she lingers,
Serenely smiling through the golden mist,
Tinting the wild grape with her dewy fingers,
Till the cool emerald turns to amethyst.

Kindling the faint stars of the hazel, shining
To light the gloom of autumn's mouldering halls,
With hoary plumes the clematis entwining,
Where o'er the rock her withered garland falls.

Warm lights are on the sleepy uplands waning
Beneath dark clouds along the horizon rolled,
Till the slant sunbeams through their fringes raining
Bathe all the hills in melancholy gold.

The moist wind breathes of crisped leaves and flowers
In the damp hollows of the woodland sown,
Mingling the freshness of autumnal showers
With spicy airs from cedar alleys blown.

Beside the brook and on the cumbered meadow,
Where yellow fern-tufts fleck the faded ground,
With folded lids beneath their palmy shadow,
The gentian nods, in dewy slumbers bound.

Upon those soft-fringed lids the bee sits brooding,
Like a fond lover loth to say farewell,
Or, with shut wings, through silken folds intruding,
Creeps near her heart his drowsy tale to tell.

The little birds upon the hillside lonely
Flit noiselessly along from spray to spray,
Silent as a sweet wandering thought, that only
Shows its bright wings and softly glides away.

The scentless flowers, in the warm sunlight dreaming,
Forget to breathe their fullness of delight:

And through the tranced wood soft airs are streaming,
Still as the dew-fall of the summer night.

So in my heart a sweet unwonted feeling
Stirs like the wind in ocean's hollow shell,
Through all its secret chambers sadly stealing,
Yet finds no words its mystic charm to tell.

THE COUNTRY SERMON.

It was a shining Sunday morn,
Out of a week of thunder born;
And soothing bells their summons peal'd,
For country folk, o'er farm and field.

I sought the church that on the hill
Towered in the sunlight pure and still;
I sat upon a grave-slab gray,
To breathe the balm of that bright day.

I watched the people gathering slow
From the far parish spread below,
From gabled grange, historic hall,
From many a cottage rude and small.

They came in choicer Sunday guise,
With Sabbath peace in patient eyes,
As those who doubtless looked to find
Some holy boon for life and mind.

I had not thought to leave the stone
Whereon I sat and mused alone,
But something in me seemed to say
That theirs might be the better way.

I rose and joined the church-bound train;
My voice blent with their chanted strain;
And one spake words not ill in tune
With beauty of that summer noon:
"How all of brightest, best we see
Must shadows of the heavenly be;

"How the blue dawn, and morning's glow
And the vast sunset's fiery show,
Soft, pearly moon, and stars of night,
Are shadows of the heavenly light;

"How all the sweetest sounds of earth,
Music of winds, birds, infants' mirth,
Anthems that float church-aisles along,
Are shadows of the heavenly song;

"How mother's fondness, rich and fair,
Large trust of child and father's care,
The selfless loves that deepliest move,
Are shadows of the heavenly love;

"How the delights that kindle here,
How gay heart-laughter ringing clear,
How ecstasies without alloy
Are shadows of the heavenly joy;

"How blessed moods of quiet deep,
How placid dream and death-like sleep,
How sleep-like death in snow shroud drest,
Are shadows of the heavenly rest:

"And how, if leal—through suffering, loss,
And thrift more perilous to the Cross,
In our inferior measure, we
May shadows of the heavenly be:

"Until at last, when Time is o'er,
And its vain visions vex no more,
All the pale shadows we shall miss,
In sheer, supreme, substantial bliss."

The simple words with feeling fraught,
A warmer faith and juster wrought;
And forth I went with brighter eye,
To find a fairer life and sky.

For things about, within me, wore
Divine, new meanings, hid before;
And unto life, thought, work was given
The sacred light of final heaven.

HOME.

OVER dark fields, and rivers deep and cold,
And fen-land waste and drear,
Flies the glad message on a wire of gold,
"Home and true hearts are here!"

Fain would I hide me from the icy blast,
But yet it may not be;
So, with averted eyes, I hurry past
The firelight and the glee—

Home! gasps my home-sick spirit, and I bound
Onward and onward still;
Glad when in distance dies the siren sound,
That might have warped my will.

And as at length I fling the wintry gloom
And perils far behind;
The twinkling point becomes a fire-lit room,
And rest, and peace of mind.

And happy faces, and a loyal wife,
Whose pulses ever beat
One tune amid the treacherous chords of life,
Unchanging, true, and sweet.

So, from the lattice in the sapphire keep,
(Where lie the treasures true)
A line of glory threads the mazy deep,
A voice comes out to woo.

Pure is the lamp that guides our feet on high,
And sweet the gentle call,
So soft around Love's silken fetters lie,
There is no sense of thrall,

As to one goal we move, a pilgrim band,
Chastened by tears and pain,
Thorns hedging up the way on either hand,
Lest we should run in vain.

IDLE WORDS.

ONCE I said,
Seeing two soft starry eyes,
Darkly bright as midnight skies—
Eyes prophetic of the power
Sure to be thy woman's dower,
When the years should crown thee queen
Of the realm as yet unseen;
"Sometimes, sweet, those eyes shall make
Lovers mad for their sweet sake!"

Once I said,
Seeing tresses, golden brown,
In a bright shower falling down
Over neck and bosom fair,
As yon sculptured angels are—
Odorous tresses, drooping low
O'er a forehead pure as snow;
"Sometimes, sweet, in thy soft hair,
Love shall set a shining snare!"

Once I said,
Seeing lips, whose crimson glow
Mock the roses wet with dew—
Warm, sweet lips, whose breath was balm,
Pure, proud lips, serenely calm—
Tender lips, whose smiling grace
Lit with splendor all the face;
"Sweet, for kiss of thine, some day,
Men will barter souls away!"

Idly said!
God hath taken care of all
Joy or pain that might befall;
Lover's lip shall never thrill
At thy kisses, soft and still;
Lover's heart shall never break
In sore anguish for thy sake;
Lover's soul for thee shall know
Nor love's rapture, nor its woe.
All is said!

RECOMPENSE.

IN Spring, two robins from the warmer lands
Builded a nest upon an unsafe limb

Of the tall tree that by my window stands,
And every morn they praised God with a hymn.
And when a certain season passed away,
Five light-green eggs within the building lay.

Above the rush and clatter of the street
Devotedly was guarded each green trust,
And the round house was an abode most sweet,
Roofed with awaiting wings. Better to rust
With iron patience than forego a hope,
And pent life in the shells was felt to grope.

But one dread day, before the sun went down,
A cloud arose, a black and monstrous hand,
That robbed the sunset of its golden crown.
A windy shudder shook the frightened land,
And portals of the storm were opened wide,
And pealing thunder rolled on every side.

Then was it some unchained malicious gust
Troubled the spray whereon the nest was made,
And to the ground the soft-floored dwelling thrust,
And wrecked its hapless store. The birds, dismayed,
Shrilled their unusual grief, and beat the air
With wings whose very whir was like despair.

At dawn, my neighbors, living o'er the way,
Sent me the whisper that their babe was dead;
And when they led me where the body lay—
The free, winged spirit's shell, untimely shed—
And the wild cries of their distress I heard,
I thought with pity of each parent bird.

Yet grief is but a cloud that soon is past;
For there the mated robins came once more,
And built again a nest, compact and fast,
Upon the tree that grows before my door;
And in it, from the window, could be seen
Five sources of sweet music, new and clean.

Time passed, and to the good home opposite
Another babe was born, and all the love
That was bereft that fierce and stormy night,
Fell to the latter child as from above;
And in the nest five yellow mouths, one day,
Of their impatient hunger made display.

We love our dead, and hold their memories dear;
But living love is sweeter than regret;
God's ways are just, and though they seem severe,
He can give back with blessings greater yet
Than we have lost. He chastens for some good,
That in our weakness is not understood.

THE FISHERMAN'S WIDOW.

THE tears are standing upon her cheeks,
And her eyes are weary and dim—
She has sat at the window for weeks and weeks,
For a sight of his boat and him.

She takes the youngest child on her knee,
And turns its face to her breast—
"O God," she says, "that my babe and me
Were laid in our grave to rest!"

The boats come sailing in over the bay,
And the women run down to the shore;
But, though she sits there till the judgment day,
His boat will come in no more.

THE SEA'S ANSWER.

THE pale moon rushed along the stormy sky,
Now hid, now seen, like some belated bark,
That drives among the breakers aimlessly,
Their white crests gleaming silver through the dark.
Pale as the moon, beneath the lighthouse cowered
The silent watcher on the great stone pier;
She saw how black the gathering cloud-rack lowered,
She heard the gale's hoarse warning muttering near;
She felt the kindred tumult in her breast,
With nature's angry mood was prompt to blend;
Yet the sea answered, stilling her unrest,
"The hardest hap comes ever to the end."

Though the great waves roll thundering to the shore,
And o'er the reef the cruel surf-clouds foam,
Though fierce and high the crashing breakers roar
Between the weary fisherman and home;
Calm to its depths the tide will ebb at night,
The waves keep whispering backward from the Scar,
And as the cottage-hearth shows welcome light,
The laden coble leaps the harbor bar.
Ears that can hear, hearts that can understand,
Know Ocean tells us, like a staunch old friend,
"God holds the future in His loving hand,
The hardest hap comes ever to the end."

The red-roofed houses piled beneath the head
In silent separate lights began to shine,
The struggling moon her tearful radiance shed
On the grand beauty of the ruined shrine;
From the quay-side, laugh, snatch of song, and call,
Came fitful to the pier upon the breeze,
And, regular as pulse's rise and fall,
Boomed the long echo of the breaking seas.
And still the watcher on the great stone pier
Lingered above the eternal waves to bend,
Taking their answer home to hush and cheer,
"The hardest hap comes ever to the end."

AT THE OLD FARM.

YES, 'tis true. The blinds are closed,
And the front door streams with crape.
Surely through the house last eve
Stole a vague and awful shape,
Dimly seen by only one—
Viewless, soundless to the rest;
Only one descried the arrow
Ere its death pang pierced his breast.

Why, they say he kissed his wife!
She was sitting by the door,
With her patient, work-worn hands
Folded, for the day was o'er,
And the twilight wind stirred softly,
Tapped the lilacs on the pane,
While belated bees swung slowly
Homeward through the lane.

"Ruth," he said, and touched her brow,
Gently as a lover might,
Stooped and kissed her, sitting there.
She was struck with sudden fright.
"Ah! what is it, John!" she cried.
"Do you think I'm going to die?"
"No!" he answered; "no, dear wife.
If 'tis any one 'tis I."

Full ten years or more had passed
Since he'd given her a word
Thoughtful, feeling-like, caressing.
She could scarce believe she heard
Rightly now. Their talk, you see,
Was, most part, about the farm—
Butter, eggs, the new Alderney,
Making hay; they meant no harm—

Kindly, honest, Christian folk,
Both the deacon and his wife;
Only, somehow, they had lost
All the romance out of life,
And the love which they began with,
Like a flower o'ergrown with weeds,
Struggled on, half choked, half buried,
In the strife for worldly needs.

Well, the night came on apace.
All the usual chores were done,
And they went to bed as usual;
Rising always with the sun,
'Twas not worth while burning candles;
And at midnight, lo! a call
Woke the sleepers. One was taken,
One was left—and that was all.

Lucy told me of the kiss.
On her way to meet the choir,
She had stopped to see Aunt Ruth,
She and Neighbor Brown's Desire.

They were not surprised this morning
When they heard that he was dead;
That he must have had a warning
Was what our Lucy said.

But I think the real love,
The true love, that never dies,
Once two loyal hearts have known it,
Wakened 'neath those evening skies,
And 'twill be a comfort sweet,
In her lonely time to be,
That before he went he spoke
To the "dear wife" tenderly.

HUSH!

"I CAN scarcely hear," she murmured,
"For my heart beats loud and fast,
But surely, in the far, far distance
I can hear a sound at last."
"It is only the reapers singing,
As they carry home their sheaves;
And the evening breeze has risen,
And rustles the dying leaves."

"Listen! there are voices talking,"
Calmly still she strove to speak,
Yet her voice grew faint and trembling,
And the red flushed in her cheek.
"It is only the children playing
Below, now their work is done,
And they laugh that their eyes are dazzled
By the rays of the setting sun."

Fainter grew her voice, and weaker,
As with anxious eyes she cried,
"Down the avenue of chestnuts
I can hear a horseman ride,"
"It is only the deer that were feeding
In the herd on the clover-grass,
They were startled and fled to the thicket
As they saw the reapers pass."

Now the night arose in silence,
Birds lay in their leafy nest
And the deer couched in the forest,
And the children were at rest;

There was only a sound of weeping
From watchers around a bed,
But Rest to the weary spirit,
Peace to the quiet Dead!

THANKSGIVING TURKEY.

VALLEYS lay in sunny vapor,
And a radiance mild was shed
From each tree that like a taper
At a feast stood. Then we said,
"Our feast, too, shall soon be spread,
Of good Thanksgiving turkey."

And already still November
Drapes her snowy table here.
Fetch a log, then; coax the ember;
Fill your hearts with old-time cheer;
Heaven be thanked for one more year,
And our Thanksgiving turkey!

Welcome, brothers—all our party
Gathered in the homestead old!
Shake the snow off, and with hearty
Hand-shakes drive away the cold;
Else your plate you'll hardly hold
Of good Thanksgiving turkey.

When the skies are sad and murky,
'Tis a cheerful thing to meet
'Round this homely roast of turkey—
Pilgrims, pausing just to greet,
Then, with earnest grace, to eat
A new Thanksgiving turkey.

And the merry feast is freighted
With its meanings true and deep.
Those we've loved and those we've hated,
All, to-day, the rite will keep,
All, to-day, their dishes heap
With plump Thanksgiving turkey.

But how many hearts must tingle
Now with mournful memories!
In the festal wine shall mingle
Unseen tears, perhaps from eyes
That look beyond the board where lies
Our plain Thanksgiving turkey.

See around us drawing nearer
Those faint yearning shapes of air—
Friends than whom earth holds none dearer!
No—alas! they are not there;
Have they then forgot to share
Our good Thanksgiving turkey?

Some have gone away and tarried
Strangely long by some strange wave;
Some have turned to foes; we carried
Some unto the pine-girt grave;
They'll come no more so joyous-brave
To take Thanksgiving turkey.

Nay, repine not. Let our laughter
Leap like fire-light up again.
Soon we touch the wide Hereafter,
Snow-field yet untrod of men;
Shall we meet once more—and when?
To eat Thanksgiving turkey?

And though not, 'twere still ungrateful
'Mid such warm companionhood
To forecast the future fateful.
Finding there no balanced good,
'Tis but a type of finer food,
This plain Thanksgiving turkey;

Of higher gifts a quaint reminder,
Then let the bounty do its best
To make us gladder, stronger, kinder.
Bid no ghost to be our guest.
But eat as those now gone to rest
Once ate Thanksgiving turkey.

HER MOTHER'S EAR.

THEY sat at the spinning together,
And they spun the fine white thread;
One face was old and the other young,
A golden and silver head.

And at times the young voice broke in song
That was wonderfully sweet,
And the mother's heart beat deep and calm,
For her joy was most complete.

And at times the mother counseled
In a voice so soft and low,
How the untried feet of her daughter
Through this strange, rough life should go.

There was many a holy lesson
Inwoven with silent prayer,
Taught to her gentle, listening child,
As they two sat spinning there.

"And of all that I speak, my darling,
From my older head and heart,
God giveth me one last thing to say,
And with it thou shalt not part:

"Thou wilt listen to many voices—
And, ah woe, that this must be!—
The voice of praise and the voice of love
And the voice of flattery;

"But listen to me, my little one:
There's one thing that thou shalt fear,
Let never a word to my love be said
Which her mother may not hear.

"No matter how true, my darling one,
The words may seem to thee,
They are not fit for my child to hear
If they can not be told to me.

"If thou'lt ever keep thy young heart pure,
And thy mother's heart from fear,
Bring all that is told to thee by day
At night to thy mother's ear."

And thus they sat spinning together,
And an angel bent to see
The mother and child whose happy life
Went on so lovingly.

And a record was made by his golden pen,
And this on his page he said,
That the mother who counseled her child so well
Need never to feel afraid;

For God would keep the heart of the child
Who with tender love and fear,
Should kneel at her mother's side at night,
With lips to her mother's ear!

THOU WILT NEVER GROW OLD.

THOU wilt never grow old,
Nor weary, nor sad, in the home of thy birth;
My beautiful lily, thy leaves will unfold
In a clime that is purer and brighter than earth.
Oh, holy and fair, I rejoice thou art there,
In that kingdom of light, with its cities of gold;
Where the air thrills with angel hosannas, and where
Thou wilt never grow old, sweet—
Never grow old!

I am a pilgrim, with sorrow and sin
Haunting my footsteps wherever I go;
Life is a warfare my title to win:
Well will it be if it end not in woe!
Pray for me, sweet; I am laden with care;
Dark are my garments with mildew and mold;
Thou, my bright angel, art sinless and fair,
And will never grow old, sweet—
Never grow old!

Now, canst thou hear from thy home in the skies,
All the fond words I am whispering to thee?

Dost thou look down on me with the soft eyes
Greeting me oft ere thy spirit was free?
So I believe, though the shadow of time
Hide the bright spirit I yet shall behold:
Thou wilt still love me, and, pleasure sublime,
Thou wilt never grow old, sweet—
Never grow old!

Thus wilt thou be when the pilgrim, grown gray,
Weeps when the vines from the hearthstone are riven;
Faith shall behold thee, as pure as the day
Thou wert torn from the earth and transplanted to heaven.
Oh, holy and fair, I rejoice thou art there,
In that kingdom of light, with its cities of gold;
Where the air thrills with angel hosannas, and where
Thou wilt never grow old, sweet—
Never grow old!

THE FARMER FEEDETH ALL.

My lord rides through his palace gate,
My lady sweeps along in state;
The sage thinks long on many a thing,
And the maiden muses on marrying;
The minstrel harpeth merrily,
The sailor plows the foaming sea,
The huntsman kills the good red deer,
And the soldier wars without e'en fear;
But fall to each whate'er befall,
The farmer he must feed them all.

Smith hammereth cherry red the sword,
Priest preacheth pure the Holy Word;
Dame Alice worketh 'broidery well,
Clerk Richard tales of love can tell;
The tap-wife sells her foaming beer,
Dan Fisher fisheth in the mere;
And courtiers ruffle, strut, and shine,
While pages bring the Gascon wine.
But fall to each whate'er befall,
The farmer he must feed them all.

Man builds his castles, fair and high,
Wherever river runneth by;
Great cities rise in every land,
Great churches show the builder's hand;
Great arches, monuments, and towers,
Fair palaces and pleasing bowers;
Great work is done, be it here or there,
And well man worketh everywhere:
But work or rest, whate'er befall,
The farmer he must feed them all.

MY BROOK.

Sing, little Brook, and bid me sleep,
In thy cool shadows, dark and deep;
For soon within the noisy town,
Sleep from my eyelids will have flown:
And I, with weary heart and sore,
Shall long to hear thy voice once more.

In early days 'twas said to me,
"The earth has not a home for thee."
Lightly I smiled to hear my doom;
Then turned away to seek my home:
And ever since, on every side,
Have sought it vainly, far and wide.

The memory of thy music sweet
May find me in the rocky street;
So thou, dear Brook, may'st soothe again
As oft before, the dreary pain,
That, like old ocean's ceaseless moan,
Is aye my heart's deep undertone.

Sing on between the banks of flowers
Where I have passed the summer hours,
In waving lines of light and shade
By mighty elms and willows made,
By Balm of Gilead, blessed tree!
Sing on, and teach thy careless glee,
Thy ceaseless melody to me.

Thou hast, like me, no other home
Than God's blue, overarching dome;
And thou art hastening on like me,
And soon we both shall reach the sea.
I fain would sing through all my days,
As thou dost, to our Maker's praise.

THE PINE AND THE WALNUT.

A MILE or so from the gray little town
Of Newcastle, perched like a gull by the sea,
On the Kittery side (where the banks sheive down
To the lovely river's golden brown),
There towered, long since, an old pine tree.

And across the stream, in a right bee-line,
Like a sentry guarding the ruined fort,
Was a large-limbed walnut, where the kine
Huddled together in shower and shine,
Nibbling the herbage, sparse and short.

Summer and winter those brave old trees
Watched the blue river that slipped between—
Leaned to the sunshine and drank the breeze,
Clothed like emperors, taking their ease
Now in ermine and now in green.

Many a time, when I was a lad,
I drifted by with suspended oar,
The wind in the walnut seemed so sad!
But, ah! what a blustering voice it had
In the rugged pine on the other shore.

And often, in restless slumber tost,
I seemed to be drifting down the tide,
Hearing the strident wind as it crost—
To die away like a murmuring ghost
In the drooping boughs on the farther side.

Perhaps 'twas a boyish fantasy—
The dream of a dreamer, half afraid—
That the wind grew sad in the walnut tree,
But surged through the pine like the surging sea,
With a sound of distant cannonade!

Only a fantasy! Who can tell?
But I think 'twill haunt me to the end,
Seeing what curious things befell
The walnut tree and the pine as well—
For they went together, friend and friend!

From a sullen cloud broke war at last,
And a grim sea-dog of the quarter deck
Took the gaunt old pine for a mizzen-mast:
In the flame of battle his spirit past,
And the mizzen dragged by the shattered wreck.

With the Union Jack across him laid,
They bore him back to the town by the sea;
The guns at the yard his requiem played,
And the admiral's coffin, it is said,
Was shaped of the planks of the walnut tree!

"NOW I LAY ME."

BED-TIME for the twittering birdies,
Mother Wren has hushed to rest;
Bed-time for my little birdie,
Nestled closely to my breast.
Now beside me lowly kneeling,
Hear the lisping tongue repeat—
Dear old prayer of tender memory—
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

With what trusting grace, and tender,
Rosy lips petition make:
"Pray the Lord to take my spirit,
If I die before I wake."
And no thought of dread comes o'er me,
As I kiss her sweet "good-night."
We're so careless of our darlings
Till we lay them out of sight!

Once again 'tis birdie's bed-time;
Little neighbors in the tree
Hush their baby bird to slumber,
With no thought of lonely me.
Ah! my mother's arms are empty,
Draped in sadness all the room,
And no whispered "Now I lay me"
Breaks upon the twilight gloom.

Smooth and white the little pillow,
Undisturbed the pretty bed,
On the table lie her playthings,
Mute reminder of my dead.
For no more my little treasure
My sad mother's heart may keep;
In the heavenly Father's bosom
I have laid her down to sleep.

Down to sleep! Ah, yearning mother,
Murmuring and sick at heart,
Full of joy shall be the waking,
Where no sorrow finds a part.
There we'll find our garnered treasures,
From all pain and earth cares free,
Where no sad good-bye shall pain us
Through a long eternity.

MY MOTHER'S WHEEL.

In the shadows creeping o'er
Narrow pane and attic floor,
Stands a wheel with mould'ring band,
Turned no more by foot or hand;
Dust upon it deeply lies,
Tiny specks that cloud the eyes;
Over it the spiders spin
Daylight out and evening in.

As I sit beside it now,
Weary heart and aching brow,
Years go backward as the tide
From the silver seasons glide.
Life again is passing fair,
Sunshine glints my face and hair,
And a simple child I kneel,
Happy by this little wheel.

Once again I hear its hum,
While the moments go and come;
See the tireless fingers hold
Finest threads like shining gold;
Busy till the sunset-red,
Till the last faint beam is fled!
Spinning all the livelong day,
Hours of pain and joy away.

Faithful hands that toiled so long,
Lips that sung my cradle song,
Come and hush my sighs once more,
Lighten burdens as before!
Softly through the silent room
Floats a brightness through the gloom,
While her presence seems to steal
Back to me beside this wheel.

UNFINISHED STILL.

A baby's boot, and a skein of wool,
Faded and soiled, and soft;
Odd things, you say, and no doubt you're right,
Round a seaman's neck this stormy night,
Up in the yards aloft.

Most like it's folly; but, mate, look here;
When first I went to sea,
A woman stood on the far-off strand,
With a wedding-ring on the small, soft hand
Which clung so close to me.

My wife, God bless her! The day before
She sat beside my foot;
And the sunlight kissed her yellow hair,
And the dainty fingers, deft and fair,
Knitted a baby's boot.

The voyage was over; I came ashore;
What, think you, found I there?
A grave the daisies had sprinkled white;
A cottage empty, and dark as night,
And this beside the chair.

The little boot, 'twas unfinished still;
The tangled skein lay near;
But the knitter had gone away to rest,
With the babe asleep on her quiet breast,
Down in the churchyard drear.

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

In a little white house on a hillside green,
Lives a beautiful woman as ever was seen;
In the sixty-five years that she's lived, I may say,
She's been growing more beautiful every day.
You do not believe it? Ask Susie, my sister,
She's the very first person that ever had kissed her.
And if she's not nursed her by night and by day,
Poor Sue would have been in a very bad way.
I can bring other witnesses whom you may face,
They will tell you the same—they were in the same case.
"Has she lovers?" Yes, surely! No less than eleven!
She has seven on earth, and four more up in heaven.
Her hair is so beautiful—faded and thin,
There are beautiful wrinkles, from forehead to chin,
Her eyes are as charming as charming can be,
When she looks o'er her glasses so fondly at me,
And I know by her life, which has beautiful been,
She is like "the king's daughter"—"all glorious within."
Ah, you've guessed who it is! It could be no other,
I'm sure, than my beautiful, darling old mother.

FARMER JOHN.

Home from his journey Farmer John
Arrived this morning safe and sound.
His black coat off, and his old clothes on,
"Now I'm myself," says Farmer John;
And he thinks, "I'll look around."
Up leaps the dog: "Get down, you pup;
Are you so glad you would eat me up?"
The old cow lows at the gate to greet him;
The horses prick up their ears to meet him;
"Well, well, old Bay!
Ha, ha, old Gray!
Do you get good feed when I am away?"

"You haven't a rib!" says Farmer John;
"The cattle are looking round and sleek;
The colt is going to be a roan,
And a beauty, too; how he has grown!
We'll wean the calf next week,"
Says Farmer John. "When I've been off,
To call you again about the trough,
And watch you, and pet you, while you drink,
Is a greater comfort than you can think!"
And he pats old Bay,
And he slaps old Gray;—
"Ah, this is the comfort of going away!"

"For, after all," said Farmer John,
"The best of the journey is getting home!

I've seen great sights,—but would I give
This spot, and the peaceful life I live,
For all their Paris and Rome?
These hills for the city's stifled air,
And big hotels, all bustle and glare;
Land all houses, and road all stones,
That deafen your ears and batter your bones?
Would you, old Bay?
Would you, old Gray?
That's what one gets by going away!"

"There money is king," says Farmer John;
"And fashion is queen; and it's mighty queer
To see how, sometimes, while the man
Is raking and scraping all he can,
The wife spends, every year,
Enough, you would think, for a score of wives,
To keep them in luxury all their lives.
The town is a perfect Babylon
To a quiet chap," says Farmer John.
"You see, old Bay,
You see, old Gray,—
I'm wiser than when I went away."

"I've found out this," says Farmer John,—
"That happiness is not bought and sold,
And clutched in a life of waste and hurry,
In nights of pleasure and days of worry;
And wealth isn't all in gold,
Mortgage and stocks and ten per cent.—
But in simple ways, and sweet content,
Few wants, pure hopes, and noble ends,
Some lands to till, and a few good friends,
Like you, old Bay,
And you, old Gray!
That's what I've learned by going away."

And a happy man is Farmer John,—
Oh, a rich and happy man is he!
He sees the peas and pumpkins growing,
The corn in tassel, the buckwheat blowing,
And fruit on vine and tree;
The large, kind oxen look their thanks
As he rubs their foreheads and strokes their flanks;
The doves light round him, and strut and coo;
Says Farmer John, "I'll take you too,—
And you, old Bay,
And you, old Gray!
Next time I travel so far away!"

CONTENT.

WONDER of wonders in my stroll
I met to-day
A woman with a loyal soul,
And deeply read in wisdom's scroll;
And I will try to tell the whole
This queen did say.

"'Tis true no carpet decks my floor,
But what of that?
God's warmest sunbeams on it pour,
With love spots fleck it o'er and o'er;
And small feet through the open door
Come pit-a-pat.

"No silken webs of rare design
And tints grotesque
My windows shade; but clinging vine
And flow'ring plant there intertwine,
And sun and leaves and stems combine
Sweet arabesque.

"Our frugal hearth knows not the storm
That makes a part
Of many lives; our true loves form
Our brightest joys and home's sweet charm.
No fireside e'er so large can warm
A lonely heart.

"Of no great deed my mind to test
You'll ever hear.
Who seeks for fame seeks not the best;
Who toils for wealth gains but unrest;
A babe's soft lips upon my breast
Were far more dear.

"Too many children—spoke your mirth—
To me are given?
Thank God, I'm of such honor worth!
I gladly say with each new birth,
Not men alone we bear to earth,
Angels for Heaven.

"A slave? No, friend, you can not see;
You do not know.
I'd give him all; he'd all give me.
Our wills must each the other's be.
When we love most, then most we're free!
This must be so.

"No sweeter, nobler lot in life
For you or me;
To be a good man's loving wife,
To guard him when temptation's rife,
Rest on his strong arm when the strife
Shall fiercest be.

"And, leaning on his faithful breast,
Look calmly out;
Secure no evil can infest,
No jealous fears thy peace molest;
For perfect love is perfect rest,
And dead is doubt."

I gazed upon this woman bright
In mute surprise.
I felt a coward in her sight.
I knew her glowing words were right.
Of truth the everlasting light
Was in her eyes.

"ONE."

"For of him, and through him, and to him are all things."

THE worn, scarred veteran from his wars returning,
Hastes with swift feet, to seek the welcome door,
His eager heart within him fondly yearning
For that asylum whence he'll roam no more.

Still, as his weak hands press the latch, restraining
The flooding tears that will unbidden gush—
As the pent waters 'gainst the barrier straining,
Bear all before them in their mighty rush,—

While, as he enters, her thin hand uplifting,
She shades her eyes that she may better see
The timid children to her quickly drifting
Stand in mute questioning at their mother's knee.

"Does Mary Morton live here?" cries he faltering,
With voice all tremulous with suppressed joy,
The mighty current of his true love altering
The alien tone his sweet guile would employ.

Ah, useless ambushment! ah, vain endeavor!
Her fond love fathoms all thy poor disguise;
No cunning cloak concealing *thee* could ever
Foil the sharp scrutiny of her keen eyes.

Quick she enfolds him in her warm embraces
On that swift-throbbing breast where he sat 'shrined
All those long years that with their laggard paces
Crept slowly on, and left no joy behind.

Then as the fullness of her great emotion
Floods with bright beauty all the earth and air,
With the great earnestness of true devotion,
She softly breathes for both the *common* prayer.

"Father, forgive these years of sad repining,
The dark mistrust of Thy kind, watchful care,
E'en while Thy gentle, loving hands were twining
This crown of joy for our poor brows to wear.

"Help us, as here we humbly kneel before Thee,
True man and wife whom nothing e'er can part,
While for Thy great love we can but adore Thee,
To pledge the service of our single heart."

While, as they kneel, the golden day advancing,
The morn's rich splendors all the heavens illume,
Through the scant window the swift sunbeams glancing,
Light with glad radiance all that lonely room.

THE ANXIOUS MOTHER.

NEVER did a kinder mother
Nurse her child upon her knee;
Yet I knew somehow or other
That she always feared for me.

When at school my teacher told her
I was busy as a bee—
Learning more than others older—
She was pleased—yet feared for me.

All the summer woods were ringing
With my shouts of joyous glee,
Through the house she heard me singing—
Yet she always feared for me.

Was she whimsical, or fretted?
That the dear one could not be!
Was I selfish, false, or petted?
That she always feared for me.

Did she think I did not love her,
Nor at heart with her agree?
Vain such question to discover,
Why she always feared for me!

But one morn, in anguish waking
With a dreadful agony,
She said, in hers my small hand taking,
"He was drowned this day at sea."

And she told how but one other
Branch grew from her household tree,
And lest I, the last, should wither,
That was why she feared for me!

Then convulsively she snatched me;
Setting me upon her knee—
To her beating heart she clasped me,
While I sobbed, "Why fear for me?

"For you told me I must walk, too,
In the path my father trod,
And that he, with none to talk to,
On the ocean walked with God.

"Often did you tell me, mother,
That our father's God was near—
That his Saviour was my brother—
Therefore I should never fear."

NOT ONE TO SPARE!

[A father and mother, in straitened circumstances, with seven children, were offered by a wealthy, but childless, neighbor a comfortable provision, on condition that they would give him one of their children. This beautiful poem tells the result.]

"WHICH shall it be? Which shall it be?"
I looked at John—John looked at me,
(Dear, patient John, who loves me yet,
As well as though my locks were jet),
And when I found that I must speak,
My voice seemed strangely low and weak;

"Tell me again what Robert said!"
And then I listening bent my head:
"This is his letter,—'I will give
A house and land while you shall live,
If, in return, from out your seven,
One child to me for aye is given.'"
I looked at John's old garments worn,
I thought of all that John had borne
Of poverty, and work, and care,
Which I, though willing, could not share;
I thought of seven mouths to feed,
Of seven little children's need,
And then of this.—"Come, John," said I,
"We'll choose among them as they lie
Asleep;" so, walking hand in hand,
Dear John and I surveyed our band,—
First to the cradle lightly stepped,
Where Lilian the baby slept.
A glory 'gainst the pillow white;
Softly the father stooped to lay
His rough hand down in loving way,
When dream or whisper made her stir,
And huskily he said: "Not her, not her."
We stooped beside the trundle-bed,
And one long ray of lamplight shed
Athwart the boyish faces there,
In sleep so pitiful and fair;
I saw on Jamie's rough, red cheek,
A tear undried. Ere John could speak,
"He's but a baby, too," said I,
And kissed him as we hurried by.
Pale, patient Robbie's angel face
Still in his sleep bore suffering's trace.
"No, for a thousand crowns, not him,"
He whispered, while our eyes were dim;
Poor Dick! bad Dick! our wayward son,
Turbulent, reckless, idle one—
Could he be spared? "Nay, He who gave
Bid us befriend him to his grave;
Only a mother's heart can be
Patient enough for such as he.
And so," said John, "I would not dare
To send him from her bedside prayer."
Then stole we softly up above
And knelt by Mary, child of love.

"Perhaps for her 'twould better be,"
I said to John. Quite silently
He lifted up a curl that lay
Across her cheek in willful way,
And shook his head, "Nay, love, not thee,"
The while my heart beat audibly.
Only one more, our eldest lad,
Trusty and truthful, good and glad—
So like his father. "No, John, no—
I can not, will not let him go."
And so we wrote, in courteous way,
We could not drive one child away;
And afterward toil lighter seemed,
Thinking of that of which we dreamed,
Happy in truth that not one face
Was missed from its accustomed place;
Thankful to work for all the seven,
Trusting the rest to One in heaven!

MY WIFE AND CHILD.

THE tattoo beats—the lights are gone,
The camp around in slumber lies;
The night with solemn pace moves on,
The shadows thicken o'er the skies;
But sleep my weary eyes hath flown,
And sad, uneasy thoughts arise.

I think of thee, O dearest one,
Whose love my earthly life hath blest—
Of thee and him—our baby son—
Who slumbers on thy gentle breast;
God of the tender, frail, and lone,
Oh, guard the gentle sleepers' rest.

And hover, gently hover near,
To her whose watchful eye is wet—
To mother-wife—the double dear,
In whose young heart have freshly met
Two streams of love so deep and clear—
And cheer her drooping spirits yet.

Now, while she kneels before Thy throne,
Oh, teach her, Ruler of the skies,

That while by Thy behest alone
Earth's mightiest powers fall or rise,
No tear is wept to Thee unknown,
No hair is lost, no sparrow dies.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

GOD bless the little stockings
All over the land to-night,
Hung in the choicest corners,
In the glow of crimson light!
The tiny, scarlet stocking,
With a hole in the heel and toe,
Worn by wonderful journeys
The darlings have had to go.

And Heaven pity the children,
Wherever their home may be,
Who wake at the first gray dawning,
An empty stocking to see,
Left, in the faith of childhood,
Hanging against the wall,
Just where the dazzling glory
Of Santa's light will fall!

Alas! for the lonely mother,
Whose cradle is empty still,
With never a shoe nor a stocking
With dainty toys to fill!
Who sits in the swarthy twilight
There, sobbing against the pane,
And thinks of the little baby
Whose grave lies out in the rain!

Oh, the empty shoes and stockings
Forever laid aside!
Oh, the tangled, broken shoe-strings,
Never more to be tied!
Oh, the little graves at the mercy
Of the cold December rain!
Oh, the feet in the snow-white sandals,
That never can trip again!

But happier they who slumber,
With marble at foot and head,
Than the child who had no shelter,
No raiment, nor food, nor a bed!
Then heaven help the LIVING!
Children of want and pain,
Knowing no fold nor pasture,
Out, to-night, in the rain!

THE "COMING MAN."

A PAIR of very chubby legs,
Encased in scarlet hose;
A pair of little stubby boots,
With rather doubtful toes;
A little kilt, a little coat,
Cut as a mother can—
And lo! before us strides, in state,
The future "coming man."

His eyes perchance will read the stars,
And search their unknown ways;
Perchance the human heart and soul
Will open to their gaze;
Perchance their keen and flashing glance
Will be a nation's light—
Those eyes, that now are wistful bent
On some "big fellow's" kite.

That brow, where mighty thoughts will dwell
In solemn, secret state,
Where fierce Ambition's restless strength
Shall war with future fate:
Where Science from now hidden caves
New treasures shall outpour—
'Tis knit now, with a troubled doubt,
Are two or three cents more?

Those lips that, in the coming years,
Will plead, or pray, or teach;
Whose whispered words, on lightning flash,
From world to world may reach;
That, sternly grave, may speak command
Or, smiling, win control—
Are coaxing now for ginger-bread
With all a baby's soul?

Those hands—those little busy hands—
So sticky, small, and brown;
Those hands, whose only mission seems
To tear all order down—
Who knows what hidden strength may lie
Within their chubby grasp,
Though now 'tis but a taffy-stick
In sturdy hold they clasp?

Ah, blessings on those little hands,
Whose work is not undone!
And blessings on those little feet,
Whose race is yet unrun!
And blessings on the little brain
That has not learned to plan!
Whate'er the Future holds in store,
God bless the "coming man."

THE HOME CONCERT.

WELL, Tom, my boy, I must say good-bye,
I've had a wonderful visit here;
Enjoyed it, too, as well as I could
Away from all that my heart holds dear.
Maybe I have been a trifle rough—
A little awkward, your wife would say—
And very likely I've missed the hint
Of your city polish day by day.

But somehow, Tom, though the same old roof
Sheltered us both when we were boys,
And the same dear mother-love watched us both,
Sharing our childish griefs and joys,
Yet you are almost a stranger now;
Your ways and mine are as far apart
As though we had never thrown an arm
About each other with loving heart.

Your city home is a palace, Tom;
Your wife and children are fair to see;
You couldn't breathe in the little cot,
The little home, that belongs to *me*.
And I am lost in your grand large house,
And dazed with the wealth on every side,
And I hardly know my brother, Tom,
In the midst of so much stately pride.

Yes, the concert was grand last night,
The singing splendid; but, do you know,
My heart kept longing, the evening through,
For another concert, so sweet and low,
That maybe it wouldn't please the ear
Of one so cultured and grand as you;
But to its music—laugh if you will—
My heart and thoughts must ever be true.

I shut my eyes in the hall last night
(For the clash of the music wearied me),
And close to my heart this vision came—
The same sweet picture I always see:
In the vine-clad porch of a cottage home,
Half in shadow and half in sun,
A mother chanting her lullaby,
Rocking to rest her little one.

And soft and sweet as the music fell
From the mother's lips, I heard the coo
Of my baby girl, as with drowsy tongue
She echoed the song with "Goo-a-goo."
Together they sang, the mother and babe,
My wife and child, by the cottage door;
Ah! *that* is the concert, brother Tom,
My ears are aching to hear once more.

So now good-bye. And I wish you well,
And many a year of wealth and gain.
You were born to be rich and gay;
I am content to be poor and plain;
And I go back to my country home
With a love that absence has strengthened too,
Back to the concert all my own—
Mother's singing and baby's coo.

THE OLD STONE WALL.

It stands as it stood in "Auld Lang Syne,"
By the side of the lane that leads to the spring,
Over it clambers the running vine,
And about it the mosses and lichens cling,
In the bushes that grow on either hand
The robins chirp and the bluejays call,
While stately cedars, a giant band,
Their shadows throw o'er the old stone wall.

What sounds it has echoed in other years,
Perchance the savage war-whoop shrill,
While the homestead blazed amid shrieks and tears,
And the cannons booming on Bunker Hill.
The bear may have roamed through the sunny glade,
The deer may have fled from the hunter's ball,
And the fox by the moonlight have slyly strayed
Since strong hands builded the old stone wall.

I wonder sometimes what his name might be
Whose workmen gathered these ancient stones.
Did his firelock stand 'gainst the nearest tree,
Was he Smith, or Thompson, or Brown, or Jones?
Did he wear a queue and a three-cornered hat?
Did he live in a cottage, or fine old hall?
Was he long or short? was he lean or fat?
This man who builded the gray stone wall.

Perhaps he landed on Plymouth Rock
From the *Mayflower's* boat, with the Pilgrim band,
And wandered away from the little flock
To make him a home in this rugged land.
Perhaps he had children, who climbed his knee
When the shades of evening began to fall,
While he told of his childhood beyond the sea,
And rested from building my old stone wall.

Hundreds of winters and snows since then
Have whitened the hills of the still old town;
The builder has gone from the haunts of men,
In the valley of death he has laid him down.
But the fruit of his labor is staunch and strong;
'Twill be well when for us the Reaper shall call,
If the work we leave shall endure as long
As his who builded the old stone wall.

SCOTCH HYMN.

There are blossoms that hae budded,
Been blighted i' the cauld,
An' lammies that hae perished,
Because they left the fauld;
But cower ye in aneath His wings
Wha died upon the tree,
An' gathers in His bosom
Helpless weans like you and me.

In the warld there's tribulation;
In the warld there is wae;
But the warld it is bonnie,
For our Father made it sae;
Then brichten up your armor,
An' be happy as ye gang,
Though your sky be aiften clouded,
It winna be for lang.

ARE THE CHILDREN AT HOME?

EACH day when the glow of sunset
Fades in the western sky,
And the wee ones, tired of playing,
Go tripping lightly by,
I steal away from my husband,
Asleep in his easy-chair,
And watch from the open doorway
Their faces fresh and fair.

Alone in the dear old homestead
That once was full of life,
Ringing with girlish laughter,
Echoing boyish strife,
We two are waiting together;
And oft, as the shadows come,
With tremulous voice *he* calls me,
"It is night! are the children home?"

"Yes, love!" I answer him gently,
"They're all *home* long ago;"
And I sing, in my quivering treble,
A song so soft and low,
Till the old man drops to slumber,
With his head upon his hand,
And I tell to myself the number
Home in the better land.

Home, where never a sorrow
Shall dim their eyes with tears,
Where the smile of God is on them
Through all the summer years!
I know!—yet my arms are empty,
That fondly folded seven,
And the mother heart within me
Is almost starved for heaven.

Sometimes, in the dusk of evening,
I only shut my eyes,
And the children are all about me,
A vision from the skies!
The babes whose dimpled fingers
Lost the way to my breast,
And the beautiful ones, the angels,
Passed to the world of the blest.

With never a cloud upon them,
I see their radiant brows;
My boys that I gave to freedom—
The red sword sealed their vows!
In a tangled Southern forest,
Twin brothers, bold and brave,
They fell; and the flag they died for,
Thank God, floats over their grave.

A breath, and the vision is lifted
Away on wings of light,
And again we two are together,
All alone in the night.
They tell me his mind is failing,
But I smile at idle fears,
He is only back with the children,
In the dear and peaceful years.

And still as the summer sunset
Fades away in the west,
And the wee ones, tired of playing,
Go trooping home to rest,
My husband calls from his corner,
"Say, love! have the children come?"
And I answer, with eyes uplifted,
"Yes, dear! they are all at home!"

MY GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED MOTHER.

THEY brought home the portrait last night to me;
On the parlor walls it is hung.
I gave to the artist a picture small,
Which was taken when she was young.
It's true to life—and here's a look in the eyes
I never saw in another,
And the same sweet smile that she always wore—
'Tis my good, old-fashioned mother.

The hair in the picture's wavy and dark,
'Twas taken before she was gray,
And the same short curls, at the side, hang down,
For she always wore it that way.
Her hand on the Bible easily rests,
As when, with sisters and brother,
I knelt at her knee, reciting my verse,
To my good, old-fashioned mother.

Her dress it is plain and quite out of style,
Not a puff or ruffle is there;
And no jewels or gold glitter and shine—
She never had any to wear.
Ambition for wealth, or love of display,
We could not even discover,
For poor in spirit and humble in heart,
Was my good, old-fashioned mother.

Her life was crowded with work and with care—
How did she accomplish it all!
I do not remember she ever complained,
And yet she was slender and small.
Motives of life that were selfish or wrong,
With Christian grace did she smother,
And lived for her God, the loved ones at home—
My true, good, old-fashioned mother.

The years of her life were only threescore,
When the messenger whispered, low,
"The Master has come and calleth for thee."
She answered, "I'm ready to go."
I gaze alone on her portrait to-night,
And more than ever I love her,
And I thank the Lord that He gave to me
Such a good, old-fashioned mother.

READY TO DEPART.

HER step grows slower on the flowery sward;
Friend after friend draws nigh with aching heart,
And whispers, "Lo, the handmaid of the Lord is ready to depart."

They ask her if she weeps for summers flown,
For the old hopes—the old loves tried and true?
She answers, "He that sitteth on the throne
Saith, 'I make all things new.'"

They ask her if she feels no vain regret,
For joys that stand like earth's ungathered grain?
She answers, "Christ hath richer harvests yet;
For me to die is gain."

They ask her if she has no tears to shed,
For her old home amid the pleasant lands?
She answers, "God shall give me in its stead
A house not made with hands."

Thus calmly trusting in the Saviour's grace,
She rests upon the margin of the tide,
And sees the light of her fair dwelling-place
Upon the other side.

BUILDING ON THE SAND.

'TIS well to woo, 'tis well to wed,
For so the world hath done
Since myrtles grew and roses blew,
And morning brought the sun.
But have a care, ye young and fair,
Be sure ye pledge with truth;
Be certain that your love will wear
Beyond the days of youth!
For if you give not heart for heart,
As well as hand for hand,
You'll find you've played the unwise part,
And "built upon the sand."

'Tis well to save, 'tis well to have
A goodly store of gold,
And hold enough of shining stuff,
For charity is cold.
But place not all your hope and trust
In what the deep mine brings;
We can not live on yellow dust
Unmixed with purer things;

And he who piles up wealth alone
Will often have to stand
Beside his coffer chest, and own
'Tis "built upon the sand."

'Tis good to speak in kindly guise,
And soothe where'er we can;
Fair speech should bind the human mind,
And love link man to man.
But stop not at the gentle words;
Let deeds with language dwell;
The one who pities starving birds
Should scatter crumbs as well;
The mercy that is warm and true,
Must lend a helping hand,
For those that talk, yet fail to do,
But "build upon the sand."

THE PSALM-BOOK IN THE GARRET.

A GARRET grows a human thing
With lonely oriental eyes,
To whom confiding fingers bring
The world in yesterday's disguise.

Ah, richer far than noontide blaze
The soft gray silence of the air,
As if long years of ended days
Had garnered all their twilights there.

The heart can see so clear and far
In such a place, with such a light—
God counts His heavens star by star,
And rains them down unclouded night.

Where rafters set their cobwebb'd feet
Upon the rugged oaken ledge,
I found a flock of singers sweet,
Like snow-bound sparrows in a hedge.

In silk of spider's spinning hid,
A long and narrow psalm-book lay;
I wrote a name upon the lid,
Then brushed the idle dust away.

Ah, dotted tribe with ebon heads
That climb the slender fence along!
As black as ink, as thick as weeds,
Ye little Africans of song!

Who wrote upon this page, "Forget Me Not?" These cruel leaves of old
Have crushed to death a violet—
See here, its spectre's pallid gold.

A penciled whisper during prayer
Is that poor dim and girlish word;
But ah, I linger longest where
It opens of its own accord.

These spotted leaves! how they once basked
Beneath the glance of girlhood's eyes,
And parted to the gaze unasked,
As spread the wings of butterflies.

The book falls open where it will—
Broad on the page runs "Silver Street!"
That shining way to "Zion's Hill"
Where base and treble used to meet.

I shake the leaves. They part at "Mear"—
Again they strike the good old tune;
The village church is builded here;
The twilight turns to afternoon.

Old house of Puritanic wood,
Through whose unpainted windows streamed
On seats as primitive and rude
As Jacob's pillow when he dreamed,

The white and undiluted day!
Thy naked aisle no roses grace
That blossomed at the shuttle's play;
Nor saints distempered bless the place.

Like feudal castles, front to front,
In timbered oak of Saxon Thor,
To brave the siege and bear the brunt
Of Bunyan's endless Holy War.

The pulpit and the gallery stand—
Between the twain a peaceful space.
The prayer and praise on either hand,
And girls and Gospel face to face.

I hear the reverend elder say,
"Hymn fifty-first, long meter, sing!"
I hear the psalm-books' fluttered play,
Like flocks of sparrows taking wing.

Armed with a fork to pitch the tune,
I hear the deacon call "Dundee;"
And mount as brisk as "Bonny Doon"
His "fa, sol, la," and scent the key.

He "trees" the note for Sister Gray:
The old Scotch warbling strains begin;
The bass of Bashan leads the way,
And all the girls fall sweetly in.

How swells the hymn of heavenly love,
As rise the tides in Fundy's Bay!
Till all the air below, above,
Is sweet with song and caraway!

A fugue let loose cheers up the place
With bass and tenor, alto, air;
The parts strike in with measured grace,
And something sweet is everywhere!

As if some warbling brood should build
Of bits of tunes a singing nest,
Each bringing that with which it thrilled
And weaving it with all the rest!

The congregation rise and stand;
"Old Hundred's" reeling thunder comes
In heavy surges, slow and grand,
As beats the surf its solemn drums.

Now comes the times when "China's" wail
Is blended with the faint perfume
Of whispering crape and cloudy veil,
That fold within their rustling gloom
Some wounded human mourning dove,
And fall around some stricken one
With nothing left alive to love
Below the unregarded sun!

And now they sing a star in sight,
The blessed "Star of Bethlehem;"
And now the air is royal bright
With "Coronation's" diadem.

They show me spots of dimpled sod,
They say the girls of old are there—
Oh, no, they swell the choirs of God;
The dear old songs are everywhere!

A FLOWER FOR THE DEAD.

YOU placed this flower in her hand, you said?
This pure, pale rose in her hand of clay?
Methinks could she lift her sealed eyes
They would meet your own with a grieved surprise!

She has been your wife for many a year,
When clouds hung low and when skies were clear;
At your feet she laid her life's glad spring,
And her summer's glorious blossoming.

Her whole heart went with the hand you won;
If its warm love waned as the years went on,
If it chilled in the grasp of an icy spell,
What was the reason? I pray you tell.

You can not? I can! and beside her bier
My soul must speak, and your soul must hear:
If she was not all that she might have been,
Hers was the sorrow—yours the sin!

Whose was the fault if she did not grow
Like a rose in the summer? Do you know?
Does a lily grow when its leaves are chilled?
Does it bloom when its root is winter killed?

For a little while, when you first were wed,
Your love was like sunshine round her shed;
Then something crept between you two,
You led where she could not follow you.

With a man's firm tread you went and came;
You lived for wealth, for power, for fame;
Shut into her woman's works and ways,
She heard the nation chant your praise.

But ah! you had dropped her hand the while.
What time had you for a kiss, a smile?
You two, with the same roof overhead,
Were as far apart as the sundered dead.

You, in your manhood's strength and prime;
She—worn and faded before her time,
'Tis a common story. This rose, you say,
You laid in her pallid hand to-day?

When did you give her a flower before?
Ah, well! What matter, when all is o'er?
Yet stay a moment; you'll wed again.
I mean no reproach; 'tis the way of men.

But I pray you think, when some fairer face
Shines like a star from her wonted place,
That love will starve if it is not fed,
That true hearts pray for their daily bread.

TREASURES.

I HAVE some withered flowers
That are softly laid away,
Not because they were so beautiful
And fragrant in their day—
But little fingers crisped them,
And little lips caressed,
And little hands so tenderly
Placed them on a "mother's" breast.
The paper that enfolds them
Was white in other years—
But 'tis rumpled now and crumpled,
And stained with many tears.
Yet, though they looked so worthless,
This paper and the flowers,
They clasp and hold, like links of gold,
Memories of jewel-hours.

I have some little ringlets,
They are softly laid away,
Their lustre and their beauty
Are like the sun's glad ray.
But 'tis not for this I prize them—
It is that they restore
The tender grace of loving face
That gladdens earth no more.
As the shipwrecked men at midnight
Have oft been known to cling,
With a silent prayer, in wild despair,
To some frail, floating thing,
So I, in darkened moment,
Clasp, with a voiceless prayer,
While wandering wide on grief's deep tide
These locks of golden hair.

I have some broken playthings
That are softly laid away,
With some dainty little garments
Made in a long-past day:
To each there is a history,
But this I may not tell,
Lest the old, old flood of sorrow
Again should rise and swell.
Now that the skies are brightened
And the fearful storm is o'er,
Let me sit in tender calmness,
On memory's silent shore,

And count the simple treasures
That still remain to show
Where Hope's fair freight, by saddest fate,
Was shipwrecked long ago.

I have another treasure
That is softly laid away,
And though I have not seen it
This many a weary day,
From every thing around me
Comes a token and a sign
That 'tis fondly watched and guarded,
And that it still is mine.
When the flowers lie dead in winter,
In their winding-sheets of snow,
We know they'll rise to charm our eyes
Again in summer's glow,
Thus I, in this chill season,
When frost and darkness reign,
Wait the blest spring whose warmth shall bring
Life to my flower again.

SOMEBODY'S DARLING.

INTO a ward of the whitewashed walls,
Where the dead and the dying lay—
Wounded by bayonets, shells, and balls,
Somebody's darling was borne one day.
Somebody's darling! So young and so brave,
Wearing still on his pale, sweet face,
Soon to be hid by the dust of the grave,
The lingering light of his boyhood's grace.

Matted and damp are the curls of gold
Kissing the snow of that fair young brow:
Pale are the lips of delicate mold—
Somebody's darling is dying now.
Back from the beautiful blue-veined face
Brush every wandering silken thread;
Cross his hands as a sign of grace—
Somebody's darling is still and dead.

Kiss him once for *Somebody's* sake,
Murmur a prayer now soft and low,
One bright curl from the cluster take—
They were Somebody's pride, you know.
Somebody's hand hath rested there;
Was it a mother's, soft and white?
And have the lips of a sister fair
Been baptized in those waves of light?

God knows best. He was Somebody's love,
Somebody's heart enshrined him there;
Somebody wafted his name above,
Night and morn, on the wings of prayer,
Somebody wept when he marched away,
Looking so handsome, brave, and grand;
Somebody's kiss on his forehead lay;
Somebody clung to his parting hand.

Somebody's watching and waiting for him,
Yearning to hold him again to her heart.
There he lies—with the blue eyes dim,
And smiling, childlike lips apart.
Tenderly bury the fair young dead,
Pausing to drop on his grave a tear;
Carve on the wooden slab at his head—
"*Somebody's darling lies buried here!*"

MY BLOSSOM.

ONCE in my quiet garden
A precious blossom grew;
Pink with the morning sunshine,
And bright with early dew.

But the Master of the garden
Carried me far away,
And with my precious blossom
No longer could I stay.

Oh! bitter was the parting,
And my tears fell fast like rain
As I kissed the budding blossom
I might not see again.

Like Eve, in her woful passion,
From the garden gate I passed;
One look of love and longing
Sent backward for the last.

But I said to the gracious Master,
When my breath came back once more—
"I know Thy hand is righteous
Though my heart be smitten sore.

"I can not tend my blossom
With water and with sun;
I gave it to Thee, my Master,
To see the work be done!

"Though I die by the wayside,
Or wander in the showers;
Keep Thou my tender blossom
Among Thy dearest flowers."

And the long, long days went by me,
But never for a day,
Though rolling up to hundreds,
This prayer I cease to pray.

And now I hear her praises
Wafted on every air;
How sweet my lily groweth,
How gentle and how fair.

And I know the mighty Master
Hath heard me day and night,
And blessed her with His blessing
Of beauty and delight.

And my life sings like the water
That runneth to the sea,
For the Lord hath been to my lily
All that I could not be.

So now I wait with patience
Till all the storm be passed,
And He shall bring my blossom
To Him—and me—at last.

"REQUIESCAT IN PACE."

SLEEP here in peace!
To earth's kind bosom do we tearful take thee;
No mortal sound again from rest shall wake thee;
No fever-thirst, no grief that needs assuaging,
No tempest burst above thy head loud-raging.
Sleep here in peace!

Sleep here in peace!
No more thou'lt know the sun's glad morning shining;
No more the glory of the day's declining;
No more the night that stoops serene above thee,
Watching thy rest like tender eyes that love thee.
Sleep here in peace!

Sleep here in peace!
Unknown to thee the spring will come with blessing,
The turf above thee in soft verdure dressing!
Unknown will come the autumn rich and mellow,
Sprinkling thy couch with foliage golden yellow.
Sleep here in peace!

Sleep here in peace!
This is earth's rest for all her broken-hearted,
Where she has garnered up our dear departed;
The prattling babe, the wife, the old man hoary,
The tired of human life, the crowned with glory.
Sleep here in peace!

Sleep here in peace!
This is the gate for thee to walk immortal;
This is the entrance to the pearly portal,

The pathway trod by saints and sages olden,
Whose feet shall walk Jerusalem the golden.
Sleep here in peace!

Sleep here in peace!
For not on *earth* shall be man's rest eternal;
Faith's morn shall come. Each setting sun diurnal,
Each human sleeping and each human waking,
Hastens the day that shall on earth be breaking.
Sleep here in peace!

Sleep here in peace!
Faith's morn shall come when He, our Lord and Maker,
Shall claim His own that slumber in God's acre;
When He who once for man death's anguish tasted,
Shall show death's gloomy realm despoiled and wasted.
Sleep here in peace!

A QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD.

A SUNNY slope where the first daisies blow,
And purple asters meet November snow;
Where somber-hued amid the brightest green,
The smooth, brown road winds down between
Fair dwelling-places, some found it good
Slow gathering here, to form a neighborhood.

Weary of noise perhaps, and glad to come
To the deep stillness of this hill-side home
Or worn with heavy labor, and in need of rest,
Or racked with pain, or burdened and sore pressed
With years, but finding quietude,
Solace, and peace in this good neighborhood.

For once these dwellings entered, the closed door
Shuts out the burdens one has borne before;
If he were poor, now is he rich indeed,
Roof overhead, and land for all his need;
None here upon his fellows' rights intrude;
Each is content in this good neighborhood.

And brown and bare, or green with summer showers,
Aglow with autumn tints, or bright with flowers;
Or folded close in robe of snowy white,
At morn, at eve, or in the solemn night
Stars looking down, a silent multitude;
God's peace is resting on this neighborhood.

See, one lies waiting to be carried there,
Whose life but now was full of vexing care;
The day too short for all she found to do,
"*Tired to death*"—her hard tasks never through;
Now tranquil, restful—every sense subdued
To the sweet stillness of the neighborhood.

Wonderful change! Oh, happy, kind release!
On the worn face a look of Sabbath peace;
To tired hands rest, and to the eyes that weep
Or wake for sorrow, deepest, sweetest sleep.

Best—sleep—Ah, if we only understood
How safe our dear ones in that neighborhood.

So every morning, my day's work begun,
I smile to think that all their work is done:
Cheerfully bear the burden and the heat;
Knowing their rest is very calm and sweet—
But, O my Father, when it seemeth good,
Let me, too, join that blessed neighborhood.

THE CHOICE.

BEN EZRA, mourning wild
Above the body of his child,
His faith with fate unreconciled,
Complained, and could not understand
Why Death's relentless hand
A thousand common lives should spare
To snatch a life so fair.

"The old outlive the young;
The sweetest song is hushed ere it be sung;
The loveliest bud," he thought,
"Is come to naught;
The page of brightest promise falls unread;
Oh, cruel jest!" he said.

At last
His soul flew back into the past.
Again he smiled above his new-born son,
And was aware of One
Who, standing by the cradle, spake:
"This gift again I take

When but a few swift years are sped.
Now choose!" the Presence said:
"Since by the changeless, fathomless decree,
This bitter loss must be,
Were it not better I should touch
The child, and mar it, lest it grow to such
As, losing, thou wouldst mourn too much?

"Or shall I crown it with my rarest crown
Of glory, to bring down
A deeper shadow when it fades
Than common shades?
So wouldst thou have—and miss—
The greater bliss!"

"Nay!" cried Ben Ezra; "since this grace
Bides but so little space,
Keep back no gift of treasures manifold
That heaven doth hold;
But pour the brightness of all spheres
Into my child's few years,
That I may drink of joy's full measure first,
Though afterward I thirst!"

The vision fled,
Ben Ezra was alone beside his dead;
And, while afresh he grieved,
Praised God, with tears, that such a child had lived!

HARVEST.

THO' weel I lo'e the budding spring,
I'll no misca' John Frost,
Nor will I roose the summer days
At gowden autumn's cost;
For a' the seasons in their turn
Some wished-for pleasures bring,
And hand in hand they jink aboot,
Like weans at jingo-ring.

Fu' weel I mind how aft ye said,
When winter nights were lang,
"I weary for the summer woods,
The lintie's tittering sang."
But when the woods grew gay and green,
And birds sang sweet and clear,
It then was, "When will hairst-time come,
The gloaming o' the year?"

Oh! hairst-time's like a lipping cup
That's gi'en wi' furthy glee!
The fields are fu' o' yellow corn,
Red apples bend the tree;
The geaty air, sae lady-like!
Has on a scented gown,
And wi' an airy string she leads
The thistle-seed balloon.

The yellow corn will porridge mak',
The apples taste your mou',
And ower the stibble riggs I'll chase
The thistle-down wi' you;
I'll pu' the haw frae aff the thorn,
The red hip frae the brier—
For wealth hangs in each tangled nook
In the gloaming o' the year.

Sweet Hope! ye biggit ha'e a nest
Within my bairnie's breast—
Oh! may his trusting heart ne'er trow
That whiles ye sing in jest;
Soon coming joys are dancing aye
Before his langing een
He sees the flower that isna blawn,
And birds that ne'er were seen;

The stibble rigg is aye ahin',
The gowden grain afore,
And apples drop into his lap,
Or row in at the door!
Come, hairst-time, then, unto my bairn,
Drest in your gayest gear,
Wi' saft and winnowing win's to cool
The gloaming o' the year!

SUMMER'S DONE.

THINNER the leaves of the larches show,
Motionless held in the languid air;
Fainter by waysides the sweet-briers grow,
Wide bloom laying their gold hearts bare,
Languishing one by one:
Summer is almost done.

Deeper-hued roses have long since died;
Silent the birds through the white mist fly;
Down of the thistles by hot sun dried,
Covers with pale fleece vines growing nigh;
Little brooks calmer run:
Summer is almost done.

Later the flush of the sunrise sweeps,
Shortening the reign of the slow-coming day;
Earlier shade of the twilight creeps
Over the swallows skimming away;
Crickets their notes have begun;
Summer is almost done.

Darkened to mourning the sad-colored beech;
Empty the nests in its purple boughs lie;
Something elusive we never can reach
Deepens the glory of days going by;
Aftermath lies in the sun:
Summer is almost done.

Child! why regret that the summer must go?
Sweet lies the aftermath left in the sun;
Lives that are earnest more beautiful grow
Out of a childhood in beauty begun:
Harvests of gold can be won
Only—*when summer is done.*

BETTER IN THE MORNING.

"YOU can't help the baby, parson,
But still I want ye to go
Down an' look in upon her,
An' read an' pray, you know.
Only last week she was skippin' round
A pullin' my whiskers and hair,
A climbin' up to the table
Into her little high-chair.

"The first night that she took it,
When her little cheeks grew red,
When she kissed good-night to papa,
And went away to bed—
Sez she, ''Tis headache, papa,
Be better in mornin'—bye';
An' somethin' in how she said it
Jest made me want to cry.

"But the mornin' brought the fever,
And her little hands were hot,
An' the pretty red of her little cheeks
Grew into a crimson spot.
But she laid there jest ez patient
Ez ever a woman could,
Takin' whatever we give her
Better'n a grown woman would.

"The days are terrible long an' slow,
An' she's growin' wus in each;
An' now she's jest a slippin'
Clear away out ov our reach.
Every night when I kiss her,
Tryin' hard not to cry,
She says in a way that kills me—
'Be better in the mornin'—bye!'

"She can't get thro' the night, parson,
So I want ye to come an' pray,
And talk with mother a little—
You'll know jest what to say.
Not that the baby needs it,
Nor that we make any complaint
That God seems to think He's needin'
The smile uv the little saint."

I walked along with the corporal,
To the door of his humble home,
To which the silent messenger
Before me had already come;
And if he had been a titled prince,
I would not have been honored more,
Than I was with his heartfelt welcome
To his lowly cottage-door.

Night falls again in the cottage;
They move in silence and dread
Around the room where the baby
Lies panting upon her bed.

"Does baby know papa, darling?"
And she moves her little face,
With answer that shows she knows
him;
But scarcely a visible trace

All her wonderful infantile beauty
Remains as it was before
The unseen, silent messenger
Had waited at the door.
"Papa—kiss—baby;—I's—so—tired."
The man bows low his face,
And two swollen hands are lifted
In baby's last embrace.

And into her father's grizzled beard
The little red fingers cling,
While her husky whispered tenderness
Tears from a rock would wring.
"Baby——is——so——sick——papa—
But—don't—want—you—to—cry?"
The little hands fall on the coverlet—
"Be—better—in—mornin'——bye!"

And night around baby is falling,
Settling down dark and dense;
Does God need their darling in heaven
That He must carry her hence?
I prayed, with tears in my voice,
As the corporal solemnly knelt,
With such grief as never before
His great warm heart had felt.

Oh! frivolous men and women!
Do you know that around you, and
nigh—
Alike from the humble and haughty
Goeth up evermore the cry:
"My child, my precious, my darling,
How can I let you die?"
Oh! hear ye the white lips whisper—
"Be--better—in—mornin'——bye!"

BELOVED OF GOD.

SHE was so fair,
The rose and lily vied not with her face,
Whereon Time dared not set his
seal of care;

Oh, soul well-lodged in such an inborn grace—
So young and fair.

She was so kind,
All things grew kind beneath her touch and tone;
Her breath gave softness to the wintry wind;
Her words like rose leaves o'er our path were strown;
Oh, nature kind!

So little taint
Of ills primeval marked her birth
Men thought they saw the glory of a saint
Fence her around from all the grosser earth,
And every taint.

Such lowliness
Was hers, her heart but throbbed to bow her down
To choose her friends 'mid sorrow and distress:
The heavens smiled, for much they love to crown
Such lowliness.

And so much love
Came from her, as from flow'rs their odorous breath,
We stole its sweetness with us, till above
The angels bore her through the Gates of Death,
Where all is love.

Yet o'er her grave
No cunning hand hath raised a gilded tomb;
True hearts enshrine her—souls she wrought to save:
The "lilies of the field" above her bloom;
Heav'n decks her grave.

"*NO MORE SEA.*"

Ay, artists come to paint it;
And writers to put in a book,
How grand in storm, and fair in calm,
The old North Sea can look.

I've wondered to hear them talking,
How to mimic in music or song,
The voice fills the brooding air
With its thunder low and long;

Since never aught but itself, I wot,
Could sound like its angry roar,
When its breakers rise to the east winds' call,
To crash on the rocky shore.

But rough or smooth, in shade or shine,
The face of the mighty main
Can speak of little else to me
But memory, fear, or pain.

Father and husband, and bold, bright boy,
It has taken them one by one;
I shall lie alone in the church-yard there,
When my weary days are done.

God never sent me a maiden bairn
To stay by me to the last,
So I sit by the restless tides alone,
By the grave of all my past;

By the waves so strong and pitiless,
That have drowned life's joys for me,
And think of "the land where all shall meet,
The land where is no more sea."

Yet I can not rest in meadow or fell,
Or the quiet inland lanes,
Where the great trees spread their rustling arms
Over the smiling plains.

I can't draw breath in the country,
All shadowed, and green, and dumb,
The want of the sea is at my heart,
I hear it calling, "Come."

I hearken, and rise and follow;
Perhaps my men down there,
Where the bright shells gleam, and the fishes dart
'Mid seaweeds' tangle fair,

Will find me best, if still on earth,
When the angel's trump is blown,
On the sand-reach, or the tall cliff-side,
Ere we pass to the great white throne.

So summer and winter, all alone,
By the breaker's lip I wait,
Till I see the red light flush the clouds,
As he opens the golden gate;

And though at the sound of the rising waves
I ofttimes tremble and weep,
When the air is void of their glorious voice
I can neither rest nor sleep.

And the strangest of all the promises
Writ in the Book, to me,
Is how on the shores of Paradise,
"There shall be no more sea."

MY NEIGHBORS.

I SIT at the window at early eve,
Rocking my baby to sleep;
While the twilight shadows with sunset beams
Are playing at hide and peep.
And, crooning a time-worn slumber-song
Dreamingly o'er and o'er,
I watch my neighbors who live near by,
As I've watched them often before.

My neighbors live in the old elm-tree,
Whose branches many and strong,
At morning and night have nodded to me
Full many a summer long.

The sunbeams fall from the golden sky,
And merrily play and shine
The livelong day on the little pair
Who have builded their home near mine.

We are very happy, my neighbors and I;
Intimate friends are we;
I sing them a song of my own sometimes,
And they merrily sing to me.
And now, as I sit by the window here,
My neighbor is on her nest,
And both of us watch with tender love
Our little ones in their rest.

She folds her wings with a warble low
Over her babies three;
And my arms are clasping my baby girl
And holding her close to me.
And the twilight shadows are falling fast
Over the mountain side;
And the breeze which has rustled the elm-tree leaves
Grows still with the even-tide.

Oh! little brown neighbor, 'twill not be long
Ere *your* children will fly away;
While my wee girl to the dear home-nest
Will cling for many a day.
There will come a time when the little nest
Will have blown from the old elm-tree;
Will you come again, dear little brown bird,
To build your nest near me?

A WOMAN'S SONG TO WOMAN.

PULL the needle, swing the broom,
Tidy up the littered room,

Patch the trousers, darn the shirt,
Fight the daily dust and dirt;
All around you trust your skill,
Confident of kindness still.

Stir the gruel, knead the bread,
Tax your hands, and heart, and head:
Children sick and household hungry;
(Though some thoughtless words have stung you),
All are waiting on your will,
Confident of kindness still.

Never mind the glance oblique,
Never cause of coldness seek,
Never notice slight or frown,
By your conduct live them down:
All at last will seek your skill,
Confident of kindness still.

Lift your heart and lift your eyes,
Let continual prayer arise;
Think of all the Saviour's woe
When He walked with man below,
How poor sinners sought His skill,
Confident of kindness still.

Sing the song and tell the story
Of the Saviour's coming glory,
To the children whom He blesses
With your guidance and caresses,
Who for all things wait your will,
Confident of kindness still.

Feed the hungry and the weak,
Words of cheer and comfort speak,
Be the angel of the poor,
Teach them bravely to endure;
Show them this, the Father's will,
Confident of kindness still.

Gratitude may be your lot,
Then be thankful; but, if not,
Are you better than your Lord
Who endured the cross and sword
From those very hands whose skill
Waited ever on His will?

Noble is a life of care
If a holy zeal be there;
All your little deeds of love
Heavenward helps at last may prove,
If you seek your Father's will,
Trusting in His kindness still.

THANKSGIVING HYMN.

FOR us, O Lord, the year has brought
 Its bloom and harvest glory;
To us, through changing seasons, taught
 Thy truth, in gospel story.
Again our voices join in song,
 And bring their glad thanksgiving
To Thee, to whom all years belong,
 To Thee, the ever-living.

We meet with gladness on each lip,
 And kindly warmth of greeting,
And in thy boundless fellowship,
 Each heart to heart is beating.
And for this day, and for this hour,
 We bring our glad thanksgiving
To Thee, the ever-gracious Lord,
 To Thee, the ever-living.

We oft have sung with joy-crowned brow
 Of thy new love upspringing,
And some who joined our songs, are now
 Amid the angels singing.
But friends below and friends above
 Unite in glad thanksgiving,
To Thee, whom all Thy children love,
 To Thee, the ever-living.

Thy power in prayer we oft have felt,
 Thy sympathy most tender,
And seemed to see, as we have knelt,
 Thy face, in veiled splendor.
For all these joys from Paradise,
 We bring our glad thanksgiving
To Thee, who every good supplies,
 To Thee, the ever-living.

So may we join from year to year,
 Thy goodness ever singing,
And each at last with rapture hear
 The bells of glory ringing.
Then, safe with Thee, again we'll raise
 Our voices in thanksgiving
To Thee, in more exalted praise,
 To Thee, the ever-living.

HOME SCENES AND HOME LIFE

IN THE

TOWN.

HOME SCENES AND HOME LIFE IN THE TOWN.

HOLD CLOSER STILL MY HAND.

HOLD closer still my hand, dear love,
Nor fear its touch will soil thine own;
No palm is cleaner now than this,
So free from earth-stain has it grown
Since last you held it clasped so close,
And with it held my life and heart.
For my heart beat but in your smile,
And life was death, we two apart.

I loved you so. And you? Ah, well!
I have no word or thought of blame;
And even now my voice grows low
And tender, whispering your name.
You gauged my love by yours; that's all.
I do not think you understood;
There is a point you men can't reach,
Up the white heights of womanhood.

You love us—so at least you say,
With many a tender smile and word;
You kiss us close on mouth and brow,
Till all our heart within is stirred;
And having, unlike you, you see,
No other interests at stake,
We give our best, and count that death
Is blessed when suffered for your sake.

THE QUEEN.

SHE lives not in a palace;
She sits not on a throne;
She holds no golden scepter;
She wears no precious stone;

And yet, her home is regal;
No prince ere lived in such:
Her subjects feel, with gladness,
Their queen's soft, thrilling touch.

Her word is jeweled scepter;
Her eyes are shining gems—
No royal barge ere carried
Such on the royal Thames.

Her subjects are her children;
Her queendom is her life;
Those who obey her mandates
Call her their—mother—wife.

BREAD AND CHEESE AND KISSES.

ONE day, when I came home fatigued,
And felt inclined to grumble,
Because my life was one of toil,
Because my lot was humble,
I said to Kate, my darling wife,
In whom my whole life bliss is,
"What have you got for dinner, Kate?"
"Why, bread and cheese and kisses."

Though worn and tired, my heart leaped up
As those plain words she uttered,
Why should I envy those whose bread
Than mine's more thickly buttered?
I said, "We'll have dessert at once."
"What's that?" she asked. "Why this is."
I kissed her. Ah, what sweeter meal
Than bread and cheese and kisses?

I gazed at her with more delight;
She nodded and smiled gaily;
I said, "My love, on such a meal
I'd dine with pleasure daily;
When I but think of you, dear girl,
I pity those fine misses
Who turn aside their head and pout
At bread and cheese and kisses.

"And when I look on your dear form,
And on your face so homely;
And when I look in your dear eyes,
And on your dress so comely;
And when I hold you in my arms,
I laugh at fortune's misses.
I'm blest in you, content with you,
And bread and cheese and kisses."

GROWING OLD.

I LOOKED in the tell-tale mirror,
And saw the marks of care,
The crow's feet and the wrinkles,
And the gray in the dark-brown hair.
My wife looked o'er my shoulder—
Most beautiful was she;
"Thou wilt never grow old, my love,"
she said,
"Never grow old to me.
For age is the chilling of heart,
And thine, as mine can tell,
Is as young and warm as when first we heard
The sound of our bridal bell!"
I turned and kissed her ripe red lips:
"Let time do its worst on me,
If in my soul, my love, my faith,
I never seem old to thee!"

TOGETHER—FOREVER!

SWEET heart, your bonnie eyes were blue
When first we met, you know:
They gave me back looks fond and true
In the days of long ago!
They shone like lakes of tranquil light
In those young days of ours,
When we with hearts and footsteps light
Plucked April's opening flowers.

Those April days went fleetly by,
And in your April eyes,
Dear heart, soft shadows came to lie
Like clouds in sunny skies.
Full many a doubt and sweet wife-care
Weighed those past days of ours,
And yet we stole some moments rare
To pluck midsummer's flowers.

Dear heart of mine, sweet heart, true heart,
Lift up your eyes to me!
Those cares had never power to part
Loves pledged so truthfully!
And in our life's late, fair fall days—
Though frost has stripped the bowers—
We'll search the old, well-trodden ways,
For autumn's closing flowers!

HIS AND HERS.

HIS to struggle and defend;
Hers to quietly arrange;
His to make rude forces bend;
Hers to soothe in every change.
His to manage or invent;
War when it may bring its night,
Giving a full, brave consent,
Evermore the watchword "Right."
Hers the inner wealth to keep,
Shielded from the outer blaze;
But when over battles sweep,
On his brow to press her praise.

Thus temptations forth he'll meet,
Perils, trials, all will dare,
While he knows an angel sweet
Watches in a safe home there—
Watches till his glad return—
When the music of the hearth,
Where their married heart-stars burn,
Breathes the dearest on the earth.

His is the stern field without;
Hers is the bright one within;
Yet there is such peace about,
Neither's ever called to win.
Equal right amid the place—
Crowned together Strength and Grace.

Sword-armed Husband! Pearl-wreathed Wife!
Ye have found the real shrine
Where the children breathe true life:
Obedience, love, joy entwined.
Yes, it is prophetic, too,
Of the mansion waiting you
Under that Eternal Dome
Where the gentle, brave, and true
Live, love in a Heavenly Home.

TWO DAYS.

No fairer day was ever seen—
The sky of cloudless blue—
The tall old trees like tents of green,
With sunlight sifting through.
But warmth and brightness brought no ease,
No soothing for my pain,
And singing birds and droning bees
Took up one sad refrain—
The echo of my longing heart,
They bore it back to me:
"The friend so long and truly loved
Is far away from thee!"

A winter morning, dark and gray—
The leaden sky hangs low,
The wailing wind rose with the day;
Upheaps the drifting snow.
I watch through half-blurred window-pane
The sullen, driving storm,
But spite of tempest's howl and strain
My heart is light and warm.
These wild discordant voices blend
In one sweet melody;
"The friend so long and truly loved
Is coming back to me!"

BETTER NOT TO KNOW.

If in the years to come, dear,
When all are growing old,
And I am wan and wrinkled,
Your love for me grows cold,
My heart would break to know it,
And death come all too slow;
Then do not tell me, darling,
'Tis better not to know.

You think me almost perfect,
And see no fault to-day—
Sometime you will discover
I am but common clay;
You'll see my many failings
With eyes that keener grow,
But do not tell me, darling,
'Tis better not to know.

If sometime in the future,
As down life's stream we glide,
You almost wish a fairer face
Were sailing by your side,
Your thoughts go back regretfully
To days of long ago,
Oh, do not tell me, darling,
'Tis better not to know.

And if you find, alas! too late,
Some mem'ry lingers still,
Some loss has left an aching void,
A place I can not fill,
Still wear for me a smile, dear,
As through this life we go,
And never tell me, darling,
'Tis better not to know.

The way is very long, dear heart,
Perhaps a darksome way,
That lies between this world of ours
And God's eternal day;
But we will walk it hand in hand,
And share each joy, each woe;
Since God doth lead us, darling,
'Tis best we can not know.

I TOLD YOU.

I TOLD you the winter would go, love,
I told you the winter would go;
That he'd flee in shame when the south wind came,
And you smiled when I told you so.

You said the blustering fellow
Would never yield to a breeze,
That his cold, icy breath had frozen to death
The flowers and grass and trees.

But I told you the snow would melt, love,
In the passionate glance o' the sun,
And the leaves on the trees, and the flowers and bees
Would come back again, one by one;
That the great white clouds would vanish,
And the sky turn tender and blue,
And the sweet birds would sing and talk of the spring,
And, love, it has all come true.

I told you that sorrow would fade, love,
And you would forget half your pain;
That the sweet bird of song would waken ere long,
And sing in your bosom again;
That hope would creep out of the shadows,
And back to its nest in your heart,
And gladness would come, and find its old home,
And that sadness at length would depart.

GOOD-NIGHT.

GOD keep you safe, my little love,
All through the night;
Rest close in His encircling arms
Until the light.
My heart is with you as I kneel to pray;
Good-night! God keep you in His care alway.

Thick shadows creep like silent ghosts
About my head;
I lose myself in tender dreams;
The moon comes stealing through the window bars,
A silver sickle gleaming 'mid the stars.

For I, though I am far away,
Feel safe and strong;
To trust you thus, dear love—and yet—
The night is long—
I say with sobbing breath the old fond prayer,
Good-night! Sweet dreams! God keep you everywhere!

GOOD-BYE.

GOOD-BYE, good-bye, it is the sweetest blessing
That falls from mortal lips on mortal ears,
The weakness of our human love confessing,
The promise that a love more strong is near—
May God be with you!

Why do we say it when the tears are starting!
Why must a word so sweet bring only pain?
Our love seems all-sufficient till the parting,
And then we feel it impotent and vain—
May God be with you!

Oh, may He guide and bless and keep you ever,
He who is so strong to battle with your foes;
Whoever fails, His love can fail you never,
And all your needs He in His wisdom knows—
May God be with you!

Better than earthly presence, e'en the dearest,
Is the great blessing that our partings bring;
For in the loneliest moments, God is nearest,
And from our sorrows heavenly comforts spring
If God be with us!

Good-bye, good-bye, with latest breath
we say it,
A legacy of hope, and faith, and love;
Parting must come, we can not long
delay it,
But, one in Him, we hope to meet
above,
If God be with us!

Good-bye—'tis all we have for one an-
other,
Our love, more strong than death,
is helpless still,
For none can take the burden from his
brother,
Or shield, except by prayer, from any
ill.
May God be with you!

THE ANSWER.

"That we together may sail,
Just as we used to do."
Carleton's Ballads.

AND what if I should be kind?
And what if you should be true?
The old love could never go on
Just as it used to do.

The wan, white hands of the waves,
That smote us swift apart,
Will never enclasp again,
And draw us heart to heart.

The cold, far feet of the tides
That trod between us two,
Can never retrace their steps,
And fall where they used to do.

Oh, well the ships must remember,
That go down to the awful sea,
No keel that chisels the current
Can cut where it used to be.

Not a throb of the gloom or glory
That stirs in the sun or the rain,
Will ever be *that* gloom or glory
That dazzled or darkened—again.

Not a wave that stretches its arms
And yearns to the breast of the shore,
Is ever the wave that came trusting,
And yearning, and loving, before.

The hope that is high as the heavens,
The joy that is keen as pain,
The faith that is free as the morning,
Can die—but can live not again.

And though I should step beside you,
And hand should lean unto hand,
We should walk mutely—stifled—
Ghosts in a breathless land.

For I am as dead as you are,
And you are as dead as I;
He who burns souls down to ashes,
He only can answer why.

And what if I should be kind?
And though you should be true?
The old love could never, never
Love on as it used to do.

A LOVE SONG.

WHETHER she love me, I can not tell.
O'er her sweet face the blushes come
and go;
Through dark-fringed covers, drooping
softly down,
I see the light from tender, deep eyes
glow.

Whether she love me, I can not tell.
I only see the gleam of golden hair
O'er the white shoulders gently rippling
low;
Than fairest pictured saint she is
more fair.

Whether she love me, I can not tell.
I only see sweet shyness in her look
Of innocence that drew my heart away;
Who, loving her, all other loves for-
sook.

Whether she love me, I can not tell.
But this I know, and find the knowl-
edge sweet:
For good or ill, for life or death itself,
My happy heart is ever at her feet.

JUST A FEW WORDS.

JUST a few words, but they blinded
The brightness all out of a day;
Just a few words, but they lifted
The shadows and cast them away.

Oh! the pain of the wounds,
Of the harden'd word's sting;
Oh! the balm and the brightness
That kind ones will bring.

Only a frown, but it dampen'd
The cheer of a dear little heart;
Only a smile, but its sweetness
Check'd tears that were ready to start.

Sullen frowns—how they chill,
Happy smiles—how they lure
One to smile, one to raise,
One to kill, one to cure.

Oh, that the rules of our living
More like to the golden would be!
Much, oh! so much more of sunshine
Would go out from you and me.

Less profession, more truth
In our every-day life,
More justice, then surely,
Lighter hearts and less strife.

For better and kinder we all mean to be,
But there's lack in the thinking of both you and me.

COMFORT.

IF there should come a time, as well there may,
When sudden tribulation smites thine heart,
And thou dost come to me for help and stay,
And comfort, how shall I perform my part?
How shall I make my heart a resting-place,
A shelter safe for thee when terrors smite?
How shall I bring the sunshine to thy face,
And dry thy tears in bitter woe's despite?
How shall I win the strength to keep my voice
Steady and firm, although I hear thy sobs?
How shall I bid thy fainting soul rejoice,
Nor mar the counsel by mine own heart-throbs?
Love, my love teaches me a certain way,
So, if thy dark hour come, I am thy stay.

I must live higher, nearer to the reach
Of angels in their blessed trustfulness,
Learn their unselfishness ere I can teach
Content to thee whom I would greatly bless.
Ah me! what woe were mine if thou shouldst come,
Troubled, but trusting unto me for aid,
And I should meet thee powerless and dumb,
Willing to help thee, but confused, afraid!
It shall not happen thus, for I will rise,
God helping me, to higher life, and gain
Courage and strength to give thee counsel wise,
And deeper love to bless thee in thy pain.
Fear not, dear love, thy trial hour shall be
The dearest bond between my heart and thee.

MIZPAH.

YES, brief our parting words shall be,
And few our parting tears;
The Lord shall watch 'twixt me and thee,
Through all the coming years.
His eyes shall be our guiding light,
Wherever we may roam
Like beacon-fires that burn at night,
To lure the wanderer home.

We will not fear that time or change
Our perfect trust can dim,
No shadow of a wrong estrange
The hearts that rest in Him;
But should they for one hour forget,
For one faint hour be cold,
The Lord shall watch between us yet,
His love our love shall hold.

Beloved, when we reach apart
The valley lone and dread,
Which, side by side, and heart to heart,
We once had thought to tread,
His faithful rod, thy staff and mine,
Through all the ways shall be
The comfort of His grace a sign
Still between me and thee.

IN THE CITY.

TWO artless souls I met to-day—
A pair of homespun lovers;
As lightsome and as careless they
As aught the sunshine covers.

Stray moths that float the summer through
Had wingless seemed beside them,
Who, wholly glad, found naught to do
With what might yet betide them.

Along the busy street they stept,
Their arms close intertwisted,
And of the crowd no record kept
While one to other listed.

I could not hear a word they said,
Yet quick, returning glances
Between them, spoke of spirits wed
Like those in old romances.

The satchel swinging on his arm,
His garments quaintly fitted,
Her old-time dress yet girlish charm,
All held me while they flitted.

I saw they would not barter one
Of either's valued kisses
For any riches under sun
That make up meaner blisses.

And then I thought how heaven comes down
To bless the simple-hearted,
Who have no care for fashion's frown,
Nor fear but to be parted.

And thought, too, if the world but guessed
The half of what it loses
By slighting love, 'twould stand confessed
In shame of what it chooses.

Yet nothing recked the happy pair
Of such a lesson needed
By folk o'erlooked, while passing there
Themselves as little heeded.

All unconcerned they dreamed not why
I scanned their tell-tale faces,
And pitied silent ones go by
To cold, heart-lonely places.

These laughed and talked delighting each,
And stept as on the heather;
Supremely blessed one goal to reach,
Linked arm in arm together.

CHANGED HARMONIES.

FAIR faces beaming round the household hearth,
Young joyous tones in melody of mirth,
The sire doubly living in his boy,
And she, the crown of all that wealth of joy;
These make the home like some sweet lyre, given
To sound on earth the harmonies of heaven.

A sudden discord breaks the swelling strain,
One chord has snapped; the harmony again
Subdued and slower moves, but never more
Can pour the same glad music as of yore;
Less and less full the strains successive wake,
Chord after chord must break—and break—and break;
Until on earth the lyre, dumb and riven,
Finds all its chords restrung to loftier notes in heaven.

DIVIDED.

I KNOW the dream is over,
I know you can not be
In all the time to come the same
That you have been to me;
The color still is in the cheek,
The lustre in the eye,—
But, ah! we two have parted hands—
Good-bye!

Not that I love you less,
For, oh! my heart is sore,—
Not that the lips that breathe your name
Are less fond than of yore;
But the unresting feet of Time
Have traveled on so fast!
And soul from soul has grown away
At last.

I think I just stood still—
For I had found my all—
But your rich life swept ever on
Beyond my weak recall;
And now, although the voice rings sweet,
And clear the dear eyes shine,
I know no part of all their wealth
Is mine.

What bridge can sad Love build
Across this gulf of Change,
Who needs must work with broken hopes
And fancies new and strange?
Alas, it is too late,—
The light fades down the sky,
The hands slip slowly each from each—
Good-bye!

SEPARATION.

A WALL was grown up between the two—
A strong, thick wall, though all unseen;
None knew when the first stones were laid,
Nor how the wall was built, I ween.

And so their lives were wide apart,
Although they shared one board, one bed;
A careless eye saw naught amiss,
Yet each was to the other dead.

He, much absorbed in work and gain,
Grew soon unmindful of his loss;
A hard indifference worse than hate
Changed love's pure gold to worthless dross.

She suffered tortures all untold;
Too proud to mourn, too strong to die;
The wall pressed heavily on her heart;
Her white face showed her misery.

Such walls are growing day by day
'Twixt man and wife, 'twixt friend and friend—
Would they could know, who lightly build,
How sad and bitter is the end.

A careless word, an unkind thought,
A slight neglect, a taunting tone—
Such things as these, before we know,
Have laid the wall's foundation stone.

TRODDEN FLOWERS.

THERE are some hearts that, like the loving vine,
Cling to unkindly rocks and ruined towers,
Spirits that suffer and do not repine—
Patient and sweet as lowly trodden flowers
That from the passer's heel arise,
And bring back odorous breath instead of sighs.

But there are other hearts that will not feel
The lonely love that haunts their eyes and ears;
That wound fond faith with anger worse than steel;
And out of pity's spring draw idle tears.
Oh, Nature! shall it ever be thy will
Ill things with good to mingle, good with ill?

Why should the heavy foot of sorrow press
The willing heart of uncomplaining love—
Meek charity that shrinks not from distress,
Gentleness, loth her tyrants to reprove?
Though virtue weep forever and lament,
Will one hard heart turn to her and repent?

Why should the reed be broken that will bend,
And they that dry the tears in others' eyes
Feel their own anguish swelling without end,
Their summer darkened with the smoke of sighs?
Sure, Love to some fair region of his own
Will flee at last, and leave us here alone.

Love weepeth always—weepeth for the past,
For woes that are, for woes that may betide;
Why should not hard ambition weep at last,
Envy and hatred, avarice and pride?
Fate whispers, so low is your lot,
They would be rebels; love rebelleth not.

A HOME.

WHAT is a home? A guarded space
Wherein a few, unfairly blest
Shall sit together, face to face,
And bask and purr, and be at rest?

Where cushioned walls rise up between
Its inmates and the common air,
The common pain, and pad, and screen
From blows of fate or winds of care?

Where Art may blossom strong and free,
And Pleasure furl her silken wing,
And every laden moment be
A precious and peculiar thing?

And past and future, softly veiled
In hiding mists, shall float and lie
Forgotten half, and unassailed
By either Hope or Memory.

While the luxurious Present weaves
Her perfumed spells untried, untrue,
'Broiders her garments, heaps her sheaves,
All for the pleasure of a few?

Can it be this—the longed-for thing
Which wanderers on the restless foam,
Unsheltered beggars, birds on wing
Aspire to, dream of, christen "Home?"

No. Art may bloom, and peace and bliss;
Grief may refrain and Death forget;

But if there be no more than this
The soul of home is wanting yet.

Dim image from far glory caught,
Fair type of fairer things to be,
The true home rises in our thought
As beacon for all men to see.

Its lamps burn freely in the night;
Its fire-glows unchidden shed
Their cheering and abounding light
On homeless folk uncomforted.

Each sweet and secret thing within
Gives out a fragrance on the air—
A thankful breath sent forth to win
A little smile from others' care.

The few, they bask in closer heat;
The many catch the further ray.
Life higher seems, the world more sweet,
And hope and Heaven less far away.

So the old miracle anew
Is wrought on earth and proved good,
And crumbs apportioned for a few,
God-blessed, suffice a multitude.

ONLY.

It was only a little blossom,
Just the merest bit of bloom,
But it brought a glimpse of summer
To the little darkened room.

It was only a glad "good-morning,"
As she passed along the way;
But it spread the morning's glory
Over the livelong day.

Only a song; but the music,
Though simply pure and sweet,
Brought back to better pathways
The reckless roving feet.

Only! In our blind wisdom
How dare we say it at all?
Since the ages alone can tell us
Which is the great or small.

SPARROWS.

Little birds sit on the telegraph wires,
And chitter and flitter, and fold their wings,
Maybe they think that for them and their sires,
Stretched always on purpose these wonderful strings:
And perhaps the Thought that the world inspires
Did plan for the birds among other things.

Little birds sit on the slender lines,
And the news of the world runs under their feet,
How value rises, and how declines;
How kings with their armies in battle meet;
And all the while, 'mid the soundless signs,
They chirp their small gossipings foolish-sweet.

Little things light on the lines of our lives,
Hopes and joys and acts of to-day;
And we think that for these the Lord contrives,
Nor catch what the hidden lightnings say.
But from end to end his meaning arrives,
And His word runs underneath all the way.

Is life only wires and lightnings then,
Apart from that which about it clings?
Are the works and the hopes and the prayers of men
Only sparrows that light on God's telegraph strings,
Holding a moment and gone again?
Nay; He planned for the birds with the larger things.

PARTED.

Oh, loved and lost so long, so long ago!
The barriers fall at last between our faces.
Time has turned back for us his ceaseless flow,
Our feet stand in the old familiar places.

Your eyes look into mine, as oft before,
The dear sad eyes of deep and earnest feeling;
And carried back to those sweet days of yore,
A flood of tender thoughts is o'er me stealing.

And as you come with hands outstretched to mine,
Step as of old so light and joyous-hearted,
My heart forgets the faithlessness of thine,
Forgets the long, long years since we were parted.

But stop! altho' your breath is on my cheek
And happy tear-drops on my lashes tremble,
I shrink from you—nay, you must let me speak—
These are not fancies I could fain dissemble.

A nameless something stands between us still—
See, see yon shapes that close about us gather!
At their approach my heart grows faint and chill.
Cling closer to thee? Nay, they part us rather!

Phantoms they are from your dead past and mine!
Events and faces gone we thought forever—
Ah, can you not their presence here divine?
The hands that erst they parted still they sever!

These at your feet once laid me in despair.
See how they still are glaring down upon me!
These are the blessed ones that found me there
And back to life and light and gladness won me.

Forgive? I do forgive. 'Tis not my pride,
But yon dark ghosts of yours keep us asunder,
And these dear ones of light here at my side
That look on me with piteous, speechless wonder.

I do forgive thee; but can not forget
The love that replaced thine. Nay, come not nearer!
Dear as you were, and are, and shall be, yet
My past, dead as it is, to me is dearer.

LOVES.

"Now tell me, dear, of all the loves
Have lived within your breast,
Of all the loves of your whole life,
Which have you loved the best?

"The first, that came when the young heart
Was strong with youth's desire,
The passion that was pain in part,
Quick change of frost and fire;
Or the swift fancy somewhere caught
In crowded city's street;
In land of palm or pine, inwrought
With dreams both great and sweet;
A face that followed, went before
In misty light,
Haunting the heart forevermore
By day and night?

"Or do you hold as best the love
Which Fate for healing brings,
The quiet folding of the dove
After the restless wings—
The love far sought, that yet was near,
A home of peace and rest?
Of all your loves, now tell me, dear,
Which have you loved the best?"

He looked into the wasting west,
Across a purple field of sea;
"Of all my loves, I've loved the best
The one that—loved not me—
Ah me!"

LET BYGONES BE BYGONES.

LET bygones be bygones; if bygones were clouded
By aught that occasioned a pang of regret,
Oh, let them in darkest oblivion be shrouded;
'Tis wise and 'tis kind to forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones, and good be extracted
From ill over which it is folly to fret;
The wisest of mortals have foolishly acted—
The kindest are those who forgive and forget.
Let bygones be bygones; oh, cherish no longer
The thought that the sun of Affection has set;
Eclipsed for a moment, its rays will be stronger,
If you, like a Christian, forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones; your heart will be lighter,
When kindness of yours with reception has met;
The flame of your love will be purer and brighter,
If, Godlike, you strive to forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones; oh, purge out the leaven
Of malice, and try an example to set
To others, who, craving the mercy of heaven,
Are sadly too slow to forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones; remember how deeply
To heaven's forbearance we all are in debt;
They value God's infinite goodness too cheaply
To heed not the precept, "Forgive and forget."

I PRAY FOR THEE.

WHEN thou art very weak and weary, dear,
When it is dark, and all seems dreary here,
And suddenly a light, almost divine,
Upon thy doubting eyes and heart doth shine
And thou the way to go dost plainly see,
Know, dearest heart, that then I pray for thee.

Far off in little chamber I am saying
These words all softly, and God hears me praying:
Dear Lord, I do not know
If all is well
With him whom I love so.
But Thou canst tell;
Oh, give him light to see!
Oh, with him ever be!
Till all is well.

When with a weight of sorrow and of fears,
Crushed to the earth, thou weepest bitter tears,
Lo! gently round the arms of tenderest love
Raise thee from depths of woe, and far above,

Thou hear'st a sweet voice say, "Trust in me!"
Know, dearest heart, that then I pray for thee.

Then with full heart of love to God I'm saying
These words, all softly, and He hears me praying:
O Lord! perhaps, to-day,
Down in the dust,
He think'st not Thou didst say,
"Heart, in me trust!"
Oh, save him, Lord, in love!
Oh, lift him up above,
Out of the dust.

When all the answering beauty of thy soul
Is throbbing, thrilling with the rapturous whole
Of Nature, as on odorous summer night
The tremulous stars thy senses all delight,
Thou feelest higher joys than these can be,
Know, dearest heart, that then I pray for thee.

For at my twilight window I am saying
These words, all softly, and God hears me praying:
Dear Father, as to-night
He sees the sky
With glorious beauty light,
To Thee on high,
Who this rare radiance wrought,
Raise his adoring thought
Above the sky.

When tenderly beside some stricken child
Thou standest, and dost speak of Jesus mild,
Dost whisper of His patience and His death,
It seems to thee, as if some quickening breath
Of God's rich power in thine own words might be,
Know, dearest heart, that then I pray for thee.

With all the knowledge-power of love I'm saying
These words, all softly, and God hears me praying:
Be with him, Lord, to-day,
And him inspire,
As lovingly a way,
A path far higher,
He shows to blinded heart,
To his thought warmth impart,
His words inspire!

And if, e'en now, eyes better loved than mine
Waken that wondrous tenderness in thine,
If all thy better self to life is stirred
By other's look, or touch, or gentle word,
If one is dearer now than I can be,
Still, dearest heart, believe I pray for thee.

Between my sobbing and my tears, I'm saying
These words, all softly, and God hears me praying:
Dear Lord, if it is best,
Make him more glad!
Give to him joy and rest:
I may be sad:
I can most lonely be,
Dear Lord, if only he
Is made more glad.

WHEN THE SONG'S GONE OUT OF YOUR LIFE.

WHEN the song's gone out of your life,
That you thought would last to the end—
That first sweet song of the heart
That no after days can lend—

The song of the birds to the trees,
The song of the wind to the flowers,
The song that the heart sings low to itself
When it wakes in life's morning hours:

"You can start no other song."
Not even a tremulous note
Will falter forth on the empty air;
It dies in your aching throat.
It is all in vain that you try,
For the spirit of song has fled—
The nightingale sings no more to the rose
When the beautiful flower is dead.

So let silence softly fall
On the bruised heart's quivering strings;
Perhaps from the loss of all you may learn
The song that the seraph sings:
A grand and glorious psalm
That will tremble, and rise, and thrill,
And fill your breast with its grateful rest,
And its lonely yearnings still.

THE DATE IN THE RING.

THE women dressed her for farewell
In snowy silk and lace;
A crown of her braided hair they set
Above her quiet face,
And on her placid breast they laid
White roses, as became a maid.

Her mother bent and kissed her lips,
And kissed her braided hair,
And folded down the peaceful hands
Upon the bosom fair,
And, weeping, saw on one a ring—
A little golden time-worn thing.

She took it from the icy hand
And looked for rhyme or name—
Something to say why it was there,
From whose fond thought it came.
She only saw, through many a tear,
A date long past—day, month, and year.

"'Twas some school-fellow's gift," she sighed,
"The child forgot to show,"
And put it back in its own place
With tender touch and slow,
And saw its tiny glitter rest
Like sunbeam on that pulseless breast.

Ah, little ring, you kept it well,
The secret of your date!
Whatever its meaning, it goes untold
Beyond the earth and fate:
Pain or blessing—who can say
How much of either in it lay?

We watch the light in our darlings' eyes,
The lines that the slow years bring,
Yet know as little what they mean
As the secret of the ring.
Joy or sorrow—God only knows
How much of both lies under the rose.

HOME.

WHEN daily tasks are done, and tired hands
Lie still and folded on the resting knee,
When loving thoughts have leave to loose their bands,
And wander over past and future free;
When visions bright of love and hope fulfilled
Bring weary eyes a spark of olden fire,
One castle fairer than the rest we build,
One blessing more than others we desire;
A home, our home, wherein all waiting past,
We two may stand together, and alone;

Our patient taskwork finished, and at last
Love's perfect blessedness and peace our own.
Some little nest of safety and delight,
Guarded by God's good angels day and night.

We can not guess if this dear home shall lie
In some green spot embowered with arching trees,
Where bird-notes joined with brook-notes gliding by,
Shall make us music as we sit at ease.
Or if amid the city's busy din
Is built the nest for which we look and long,
No sound without shall mar the peace within,
The calm of love that time has proved so strong,
Or if, ah! solemn thought, this home of ours
Doth lie beyond the world's confusing noise;
And if the nest be built in Eden bowers,
What do we still, but silently rejoice?
We have a home, but of its happy state
We know not yet. We are content to wait.

WHAT WE SHOULD CARE FOR.

It matters little where I was born,
Or if my parents were rich or poor;
Whether they shrank at the cold world's scorn,
Or walked in the pride of wealth secure;
But whether I live an honest man,
And hold my integrity firm in my clutch,
I tell you, brother, plain as I am,
It matters much!

It matters little how long I stay
In a world of sorrow, sin, and care;
Whether in youth I am called away,
Or live till my bones and pate are bare;
But whether I do the best I can
To soften the weight of adversity's touch
On the faded cheek of my fellow-man,
It matters much!

It matters little where be my grave,
Or on the land or on the sea,
By purling brook or 'neath stormy wave,
It matters little or naught to me;
But whether the angel Death comes down
And marks my brow with his loving touch,
As one that shall wear the victor's crown,
It matters much!

HIDDEN PATHS.

What thou doest I know not now, but I shall know hereafter.

Sad-eyed Madonnas walk the earth in every land—
Pure mother-hearts whose secret e'en to them is hid
In deeps of love and pain, deeps by bright promise spanned,
But all unbridged of those fulfillments, that amid

Earth's pressing needs, make solid ground for mortal feet.
It is so hard to walk by faith when years go by,
And bring no added sight, or proof wherewith to greet
And strengthen failing power, or still reproachful cry.

So walk the seers and sages of all lands and times,
A true apostle's true succession from the old

First days, when God first set His seal
in ancient climes
Upon devoted priestly souls, through
all the fold,

Down to the hour when the last priest-
ess-mother bore
Some child of promise for some wait-
ing nation's need,
All true reformers, teachers, leaders,
evermore
Must come in forms prepared, despite
all seeming need.

In forms prepared, and through their
one appointed lot
Tho' none in all the era see and re-
cognize
The worker, as in grooves of royal
law, forgot
By those for whom they toil, to
mounts of sacrifice

Called irresistibly—and for all reason
why
The toll, toll, toll, throughout their
soul the era-bell
By which God calls His chosen—Ah!
beloved, to die
Were so much easier; yet "He doeth
all things well."

The far event and purpose justifies,
explains,
No God-appointed work may ever
"haste" or "rest,"
The pruned away, the shorn, unblos-
soming years have gains
Of late rich fruit that proves a hand
divine hath dressed.

It shall be given these to walk in Para-
dise.
God's priests and priestesses, co-
workers are with Him;
'Tis not too much to pay for such pearl
of great price
That many passing earthly years be
shorn and dim.

BIRTH SONG.

LET winds and waters murmur clear;
More sweet this infant voice to me,
That comes as from the golden sphere
Where thrills the soul of harmony:
Blow, tempest, and let thunder roll—
God gives us this immortal soul.

Let scepters flash, and senates shake;
The war-steed neigh, the trumpet
blow;
Let banners strike the wind, and make
A splendor where the warriors go:
What heed we? War may rage and
roll—
God gives us this immortal soul.

Let science glimmer on the brine,
Bind isle to isle, and clime to clime;
And on the ocean's lyric line,
Let lightning twang the psalms of
time:
A triumph! Let the music roll—
God gives us this immortal soul.

For, in this soul, serene and clear,
All mortal and immortal shine:
Eternity, a single year,
Thought glowing into light divine:
Bend, bend the knee! let anthems roll
For God's sweet gift, a virgin soul!

THE EVENING HEARTHSTONE.

GLADLY now we gather round it,
For the toiling day is done,
And the gay and solemn twilight
Follows down the golden sun.
Shadows lengthen on the pavement,
Stalk like giants through the gloom,
Wander past the dusky casement,
Creep around the fire-lit room.
Draw the curtain, close the shut-
ters,
Place the slippers by the fire;
Though the rude wind loudly
mutters,
What care we for wind-
sprite's ire?

What care we for outward seeming?
Fickle Fortune's frown or smile?
If around us love is beaming,
Love can human ills beguile.
'Neath the cottage-roof and palace,
From the peasant to the king,
All are quaffing from life's chalice
Bubbles that enchantment bring.
Grates are glowing, music flowing
From the lips we love the best;
Oh, the joy, the bliss of knowing
There are hearts whereon to rest!

Hearts that throb with eager gladness—
Hearts that echo to our own—
While grim care and haunting sadness
Mingle ne'er in look or tone.
Care may tread the halls of daylight,
Sadness haunt the midnight hour,
But the weird and witching twilight
Brings the glowing hearthstone's dower.
Altar of our holiest feelings!
Childhood's well-remembered shrine!
Spirit-yearnings — soul-revealings—
Wreaths immortal round thee twine!

THE BABY OVER THE WAY.

As I've sat at my chamber window,
I've noticed again and again
The sweetest of baby figures
At the opposite window pane;
Rosy cheeks daintily dimpled,
Curls that, without any check,
Tumble and twist in confusion,
With the corals about its neck.

But how has that little one stolen
A march on my foolish old heart?
And why, as I watch those bright eyes,
Will the quick tear instinctively start?

Ah! because in the long-ago years,
Ere time mingled my tresses with gray,
I, too, had a baby as lovely
As the little one over the way.

From the white robe and clustering curls,
From that vision of infinite joy,
Oh, sadly, so sadly I turn
To all I have left of my boy;
To the baby-clothes, yellow with age,
To the curl that once lay on his brow,
To the old-fashioned cradle — the nest—
So drearily tenantless now.

The first grief comes back to me then,
The longing that can not be told,
For the sight of the dear little face,
For my own darling baby to hold;
And my arms ache with emptiness, so
That I feel I am hardly content
To wait for the summons to go
The way that my little one went.

And so, for the sake of the joy
That long ago gladdened my heart,
For the light that once shone on my way,
So quickly, alas! to depart;
For the love that I bore my own darling,
All babies are dearer to-day;
And I think I must call on the mother
Of that baby over the way.

CHILDLESS.

My neighbor's house is not so high,
Nor half so nice as mine;
I often see the blinds ajar,
And though the curtain's fine,
It's only muslin, and the steps
Are not of stone at all—
And yet I long for her small home
To give mine all in all.

Her lawn is never left to grow—
The children tread it down;
And when the father comes at night,
I hear them clatter down
The gravel walk; and such a noise
Comes to my quiet ears,
As my sad heart's been waiting for
So many silent years.

Sometimes I peep to see them seize
His coat, and hand, and knees—
All three so anxious to be first;
And hear her call, "Don't tease
Papa"—the baby springs—
And then the low brown door
Shuts out their happiness, and I
Sit wishing, as before,

That my neighbor's little cottage
And the jewels of her crown
Had been my own; my mansion
With its front of granite brown,
Its damask, and its Honiton—
Its lawn so green and bright—
How gladly would I give them
For her motherhood to-night!

WHERE IS YOUR BOY TO-NIGHT?

LIFE is teeming with evil snares,
The gates of sin are wide,
The rosy fingers of pleasure wave
And beckon the young inside.
Man of the world, with open purse,
Seeking your own delight,
Pause, ere reason is wholly gone—
Where is your boy to-night?

Sirens are singing on every hand
Luring the ear of youth,
Gilded falsehood with silver notes
Drowneth the voice of truth.
Dainty lady in costly robes,
Your parlors gleam with light,
Fate and beauty your senses steep—
Where is your boy to-night?

Tempting whispers of royal spoil
Flatter the youthful soul
Eagerly entering into life,
Restive of all control.
Needs are many, and duties stern
Crowd on the weary sight;
Father, buried in business cares,
Where is your boy to-night?

Pitfalls lurk in the flowery way,
Vice has a golden gate,
Who shall guide the unweary feet
Into the highway straight?
Patient worker with willing hand
Keeping the home-hearth bright,
Tired mother with tender eyes,
Where is your boy to-night?

Turn his feet from the evil paths
Ere they have entered in,
Keep him unspotted while yet ye may,
Earth is so stained with sin;
Ere he has learned to follow wrong,
Teach him to love the right,
Watch, ere watching is wholly vain—
Where is your boy to-night?

TAKE THIS LETTER TO MY MOTHER.

TAKE this letter to my mother,
Far across the deep blue sea,
It will fill her heart with pleasure,
She'll be glad to hear from me.
How she wept when last we parted,
How her heart was filled with pain,
When she said, "Good-bye, God bless you—
We may never meet again."

Take this letter to my mother,
It will fill her heart with joy,
Tell her that her prayers are answered,
God protects her absent boy;
Tell her to be glad and cheerful,
Pray for me where'er I roam,
And ere long I'll turn my footsteps
Back toward my dear old home.

Take this letter to my mother,
It is filled with words of love,
If on earth I'll never meet her,
Tell her that we'll meet above,

Where there is no hour of parting,
All is peace, and love, and joy;
God will bless my dear old mother,
And protect her only boy.

THE MOTHER.

"A perfect woman nobly planned."

NEVER too tired to hear or heed
The slightest cry of her children's need;
Never impatient in look or word,
By what tender thoughts her heart is stirred.

Through nights of watching and busy days,
Unwearied, she asks no meed of praise;
For others spending and being spent,
She finds therein her sweet content.

Though decked in no robes of silken sheen,
In her small domain she walks a queen;
Outshining far the costliest gem,
A spirit meek is her diadem.

Though fortune frown, she is brave of heart,
No selfish thought in her life has part;
Patient and trustful though storms may lower,
A faithful friend in life's darkest hour.

TWO TOILERS.

"LADY, sitting in silken gear,
Up in your chamber height,
Lay sunshine in a golden web
Across your floor to-night?
For sure your threads were all of gold,
I saw their glimmer fall
Through your fingers, and cast a gleam
Upon your pictured wall."

"Alas! but heavy-hearted still,
I see along the west,
Day's white sail vanish dreamily
Over the darkness crest.

For scant, and poor, the freight all told
I have sent out therein;
Though rich, and full, and splendid heaped,
I hoped it would have been."

For clumsy weaving tarnished oft
The gleaming treasure gold;
And my best arts but left it there
Faded, and dull, and old.
Sometimes tears dimmed my vision, so
I only could work slow;
Or the tears dropping rusted sore
The burnished, yellow glow.

"Oh! may we not with weary eyes,
Friend, fold our hands and weep,
When it is growing late for work,
And almost time to sleep?
For we are but vain toilers all,
Each in his empty way;
And life's best gold is set with gloom,
And Heaven's far away."

"Toiler, sitting in humble garb,
Down in your shady room,
Patient have I seen you bending
Over your busy loom;
I have caught no sheen of golden,
Glinting, glad and gay—
Naught for your daily store to weave,
But dull and quiet gray."

"Toiler, like a warm wing-shelter
Comes darkness brooding o'er;
Resting in the soothing shadow,
Sit now within thy door;
Tell me how through the light's delay
You wove your stint to-day,
Out of that gloomy, shady store,
Your dim and dusky gray?"

"God cares to have (I guess not why,
And yet so I believe),
In His fair world—the dusty web
That even spiders weave,
There must be reason, then, to think
He needs the poor, pale gray;
And so I weave it carefully,
And simply trust He may."

"And sometime in a glad surprise,
As if by chance inrolled,
Shining from out the dusk I find
Even a thread of gold,
How richly forth it shines erewhile
Set in my homely woof;
And like a crown glows out so grand
Beneath my humble roof!"

"I am content to fold my hands,
Now at the still night-fall;
God sets no soul to work for naught,
Nor cheats one of us all
With wasted toil; we work His will
Each in his diff'rent way;
And e'en life's gray has in it gold,
Nor is Heaven far away."

TIRED MOTHERS.

A LITTLE elbow leans upon your knee,
Your tired knee that has so much to bear;
A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly
From underneath a thatch of tangled hair,
Perhaps you do not heed the velvet touch
Of warm, moist fingers, holding yours so tight—
You do not prize this blessing overmuch;
You almost are too tired to pray to-night.

But it is blessedness! A year ago
I did not see it as I do to-day—
We are all so dull and thankless, and too slow
To catch the sunshine till it slips away.
And now it seems surpassing strange to me
That, while I bore the badge of motherhood,
I did not kiss more oft and tenderly
The little child that brought me only good.

And if, some night when you sit down to rest,
You miss this elbow from your tired knee—
This restless, curling head from off your breast,
This lisping tongue that chatters constantly;
If from your own the dimpled hands had slipped,
And ne'er would nestle to your palm again;
If the white feet into their grave had tripped,
I could not blame you for your heartache then.

I wonder so that mothers ever fret
At little children clinging to their gown;
Or that the foot-prints, when the days are wet,
Are ever black enough to make them frown.
If I could find a little muddy boot,
Or cap or jacket, on my chamber floor;
If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,
And hear it patter in my home once more;

If I could mend a broken cart to-day,
To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky—
There is no woman in God's world could say
She was more blissfully content than I.
But ah! the dainty pillow next my own
Is never rumpled by a shining head;
My singing birdling from its nest has flown;
The little boy I used to kiss is dead!

A MOTHER'S WORK.

"She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."—PROV. xxxi. 27.

EARLY in the morning
Up as soon as light,

Overseeing breakfast,
Putting all thinks right;
Dressing little children,
Hearing lessons said,
Washing baby faces,
Toasting husband's bread.

After breakfast reading,
Holding one at prayers:
Putting up the dinners,
Mending little tears;
Good-bye kissing children,
Sending off to school,
With a prayer and blessing,
Mother's heart is full.

Washing up the dishes,
Sweeping carpets clean,
Doing up the chamber-work,
Sewing on machine;
Baby lies a-crying—
Rubbing little eyes,
Mother leaves her sewing
To sing the lullabies.

Cutting little garments,
Trimming children's hats,
Writing for the papers,
With callers having chats;
Hearing little footsteps
Running through the hall,
Telling school is over,
As mamma's name they call.

Talking with the children
All about their school,
Soothing little troubles,
Teaching grammar rules;
Seeing about supper,
Lighting up the room,
Making home look cheerful,
Expecting husband soon.

Then, with all her headaches,
Keeping to herself,
Always looking cheerful,
Other lives to bless.
Putting to bed children—
Hearing say their prayers,
Giving all a good-night's kiss,
Before she goes down-stairs.

Once more in the parlor,
Sitting down to rest,
Reading in the Bible
How His promises are blest;
Taking all her sorrows
And every care to One,
With that trusting, hopeful heart,
Which none but mothers own.

GOING AWAY.

Do not be angry with me
For an idle word I say;
Do not be angry, father,
Because I am going away.
Have patience with me, my mother,
Though I may have none with you;
But I love you, I love you, mother,
Whatever I say or do.
Look kindly upon me, sister,
You are beautiful and gay;
Your days will be long and happy,
But I am going away.
With me, if you could but read it,
Clear written on cheek and brow,
There is no past, no future—
Only a brief, calm Now;
A little space to be glad in—
A lesser space to grieve;
And life's whole scene fades from me,
As the landscape fades at eve.

Except—that eve I shall see not,
My day is ended at noon;
And the saddest bit of the story
Is—it does not end too soon.
I am so weary, weary!
I could turn my face to the wall;
Like a sick child, long before bedtime,
Drop asleep among you all;
So glad that lessons are over;
Still gladder that play is done;
And a dusky curtain stretches
Between me and the sun.

Good-bye, my father and mother!
Two of you—and but one of me!
And, sister, you'll find some stranger
Much closer than I could be;
One more—but death's quiet teaching
Is making me slowly wise;
My heart, too poor for his keeping,
Thou, God, Thou wilt not despise;
My soul, too weak for earth's battle,
Thou wilt gird up anew,
And the angels shall see me doing
The work I was meant to do;
The work that I ever failed in,
And wept o'er, and tried again,
Till brain, and body, and spirit
Snapped under the cruel strain.

That is over. So none need be sorry;
You rather ought to rejoice,
And sing my *vade in pacem*
Without a break in your voice;
And let me depart contented,
Before the heat of the day;
For I shall be still God's servant,
Although I have gone away!

MY MOTHER KNELT IN PRAYER.

ONCE in my boyhood's gladsome day,
My spirits light as air,
I wandered to a lonely room,
Where mother knelt in prayer.

Her hands were clasped in fervency,
Her lips gave forth no sound;
Yet, awe-struck, solemnly I felt
I stood on holy ground.

My mother, all entranced in prayer,
My presence heeded not;
And reverently I turned away
In silence from the spot.

An orphan wanderer, far from home
In after-time I strayed;
But God has kept me, and I feel
He heard her when she prayed.

"SIT STILL, MY DAUGHTER."

"SIT still, my daughter!
Wouldst thou learn thy lesson,
And wouldst thou comfort bring my wounded heart?
Another heard thy sweet confession:
'Mother! we can not part.'

"Sit still, my daughter!
Wait in sweet submission
Until the way made plainer be.
Fear not, the Lord who prompted thy decision
Will strengthen thee.

"Sit still, my daughter!
Banish all thy sadness;
The clouds around thy path will flee away,
And thou shalt bind thy sheaves with gladness—
'Watch and Pray.'

"Sit still, my daughter!
Thine heavenly Friend
'Will keep thy feet;' thou shalt not rove,
But gather here the choicest gifts He'll send;
His banner over thee is 'Love.'

"Sit still, my daughter!
He who led thee hither
Will perfect what concerneth thee;
His spotless robe shall be thy shelter,
His precious blood thine only plea.

"Sit still, my daughter!
Enviable station!
Thus lowly waiting at the Master's feet,
With trustful confidence and bright anticipation
Of joy complete.

"Sit still, my daughter!
We, too, would seek this low position,
Would ever learn obedience to our Father's will,
Would gladly heed this gentle admonition,
Daughter, 'Sit still.'"

THE MOTHER'S DAY-DREAM.

A MOTHER sat at her sewing,
But her brow was full of thought;
The little one playing beside her
Her own sweet mischief wrought.
A book on a chair lay near her;
'Twas open, I strove to see,
At the old Greek artist's story,
"I paint for eternity."

So I fancied all her dreaming;
I watched her serious eye
As the 'broidery dropped from her fingers,
And she heaved a heartfelt sigh.
She drew the little one nearer,
And looked on the sunny face,
Swept the bright curls from the open brow,
And kissed it with loving grace.

And she thought, "I, too, am an artist;
My life-work here I see,
This sweet, dear face, my hand must trace,
I must paint for eternity.
Hence, each dark passion shadow!
Pain's deeply-graven lines!
Hers must be the reflected beauty
That from the pure heart shines.

"But how shall I blend the colors,
How mingle the light and shade,
Or arrange the weird surroundings
The future has arrayed?
Oh, Life! thou hast weary nightfalls,
And days all drear that be,
But, from thy darkness, marvelous grace
Wilt thou evoke for me?

"Alas, that I am but a learner!
So where shall I make me wise,
Or obtain the rare old colors,
The Master's precious dyes?
I must haste to the fount of beauty,
Must pleasingly kneel at His feet,
And crave, 'mid his wiser scholars,
The humblest pupil's seat.

"Then, hand and heart together,
Some grace shall add each day;
Thus, thus, shall her face grow lustrous
With beauty that can not decay.
My darling! God guide my pencil,
And grant me the vision to see
In the light of His love, without blemish or stain,
In the coming eternity."

Then the mother awoke from her day-dream,
Her face grew bright again,
And I knew her faith was strengthened
By more than angel's ken.
Her fingers flew the faster
As she sang a soft, low song;
It seemed like a prayer, for the child so fair,
As it thrilled the air along.

MENDING STOCKINGS.

IT is an autumn afternoon
Chilly with rain and gray with cloud;
Rocking, the while my needle flies,
I think and talk sometimes aloud.

Piled in my lap, a soft, bright heap,
Are crimson stockings, and white, and blue;
How little feet will dance them out,
Who but a mother ever knew?

Still is the house—my merry three
Out for a visit have gone to-day;
Here in the hush I sit and rest,
Tired with their rush and noise and play.

Ah! but two dear brown eyes will peep
Over my darn in this crimson toe;
He is the only son we have,
And mothers love their boys, you know!

Over and under, out and in,
(My stocking mending is never done!)
Slowly across the lessening space
Threads of the soft blue worsted run.

Is it a fancy?—Gentle arms
Creep 'round my neck in a loving wise;
Yes, my twin girlie, these blue hose
Bring me a thought of your azure eyes.

Easy it is to weave a web
Out of my youngest darling's hair,
Filling the space her rounded knee
Pressed through the stocking soft and fair;

Dancing with every tricksy bound,
Framing the happy sunlit face,—
Lift up your lips, my rosebud, do,
Where for my kisses is sweeter place?

Hark! was that a step in the hall?
No—'twas a sweep of the wind outside.
Mending and darning—day has waned,
Twilight is spreading her mantle wide.

Ah! my mending is not complete
Now that the stockings folded are,
Soberer work have I to do—
Weaving whose issues are greater far.

Faint fall my hands. Help me, O Lord!
Take Thou the work, for these souls are Thine.
Sanctify, teach, mold, guide, and bless,
Till in Thy likeness their spirits shine!

Darker it grows. The lonely house
Waits for the sound of their merry cheer.
Hark! they have come with laugh and shout.
Oh, I am glad they are safely here!

FAILED.

YES, I am a ruined man, Kate!
Everything gone at last;
Nothing to show for the trouble and toil
Of the weary years that are past;
Houses and lands and money
Have taken wings and fled,
This morning I signed away
The roof from over my head.

I shouldn't care for myself, Kate;
I'm used to the world's rough ways;
I've dug and delved, and plodded along
Through all my manhood days;
But I think of you and the children,
And it almost breaks my heart,
For I thought so surely to give my boys
And girls a splendid start.

So many years on the ladder,
I thought I was near the top—
Only a few years longer,
And then I expected to stop
And put the boys in my place, Kate,
With an easier life ahead,
But now I must give the prospect up;
That comforting dream is dead.

"I'm worth more than my gold," eh?
You're good to look at it so,
But a man isn't worth very much, Kate,
When his hair is turning to snow;
My poor little girls, with their soft, white hands
And innocent eyes of blue,
Turned adrift in the heartless world—
What can and what will they do?

"An honest failure?" indeed, it was,
Dollar for dollar paid.
Never a creditor suffered,
Whatever people have said.
Better are rags and a conscience clear,
Than a palace and flushes of shame,
One thing I shall leave to my children, Kate,
And that is an honest name.

What's that? "The boys are not troubled?
They are ready now to begin
And gain us another fortune,
And work through thick and thin?"

The noble fellows! already I feel
I haven't so much to bear,
Their courage has lightened my heavy load
Of misery and despair.

"And the girls were so glad it was honest?
They'd rather not dress so fine,
And think that they did it with money
That wasn't honestly mine?
They're ready to show what they're made of,
Quick to earn and to save?"
My blessed, good little daughters!
So generous and so brave.

And you think we needn't fret, Kate,
While we have each other left,
No matter of what possession
Our lives may be bereft?
You are right. With a quiet conscience
And a wife so good and true
I'll put my hand to the plow again,
And know that we'll pull through.

THEY SAID.

THEY said of her, "She never can have felt
The sorrows that great, earnest natures feel,"
They said, "Her placid lips have never spelt
Hard lessons, taught by pain. Her eyes reveal
No passionate yearning, no perplexed appeal
To other eyes. Life and her heart have dealt
With her but lightly." When the Pilgrims dwelt
First by their Rock, lest savage feet should steal
To precious graves with desecrating tread,
The burial-field was with the plowshare crossed;
And there her silken curls in the light maize tossed.
With thanks those Pilgrims ate their bitter bread,
While peaceful harvests hid what they prized most:
I thought of them when this of her they said.

They of this other said, "No heart has she,
Else would she not with ready prattle smile
On all who cross her path, and merrily
The steps of child, man, bird, and brute beguile
With overflow of winsome prank and wile.
How shallow must this sparkling bubbler be!"
And did you never down a hill-side see
A laughing brook go dancing, mile on mile,
Fresh from a never-failing mountain spring,
Whose depths of sweetness none might sound or guess?
The spring was the brook's heart, which sought to fling
Gleams of its hidden joy on everything.
Life's deep wells yield perennial cheerfulness.
They spake of her from their own shallowness.

SO GOES THE WORLD.

OUR varied days pass on and on,
Our hopes fade unfulfilled away,
And things which seem the life of life,
Are taken from us day by day;
And yet through all the busy streets
The crowd of pleasure-seekers throng,
The puppets play, the showman calls,
And gossips chat the whole day long,
And so the world goes on!

Our little dramas come to naught;
Our lives may fail, our darling plan
May crumble into nothingness,
Our firmest castle fall to sand;
And yet they all may sing and dance,
The money-makers laugh and shout,
The stars, unmindful, still shine bright,
Unconscious that our light is out,
And so the world goes on!

The house grows sad that once was gay;
The dear ones seek their Blessed Home,
And we may watch and wait in vain
To hear their well-known footsteps come;
And yet the sunlight flecks the floor
And makes the summer shadows long,
The rosebuds at the casement bloom,
The bird pours forth this cheerful song,
And so the world goes on!

And God goes on, and with our woe,
Weaves golden threads of joy and peace,
Guarding within His heart of hearts,
Our days of pain our days of ease—
He marks them all—the seed, the sheaves,
The dancer's smile, the mourner's tears,
And keeps them safe—His children all—
Through all these vernal years.
And so the world goes on!

IF WE KNEW.

If we knew the woe and heart-ache
Waiting for us down the road,
If our lips could taste the wormwood,
If our backs could feel the load;
Would we waste to-day in wishing
For a time that ne'er can be;
Would we wait in such impatience
For our ships to come from sea?

If we knew the baby fingers
Pressed against the window-pane,
Would be cold and stiff to-morrow—
Never trouble us again;
Would the bright eyes of our darling
Catch the frown upon our brow?
Would the prints of rosy fingers
Vex us as they do now?

Ah, these little ice-cold fingers,
How they point our memories back
To the hasty words and actions
Strewn along our backward track!
How those little hands remind us,
As in snowy grace they lie,
Not to scatter thorns—but roses—
For our reaping by and by!

Strange we never prize the music
Till the sweet-voiced bird has flown;
Strange that we should slight the violets
Till the lovely flowers are gone;
Strange that summer skies and sunshine
Never seem one-half so fair
As when winter's snowy pinions
Shake their white down in the air!

Lips from which the seal of silence
None but God can roll away,
Never blossomed in such beauty
As adorns the mouth to-day;
And sweet words that freight our memory
With their beautiful perfume,
Come to us in sweeter accents
Through the portals of the tomb.

Let us gather up the sunbeams
Lying all along our path:
Let us keep the wheat and roses,
Casting out the thorns and chaff;
Let us find our sweetest comfort
In the blessings of *to-day;*
With a patient hand removing
All the briers from our way.

MAKE CHILDHOOD SWEET.

Wait not till the little hands are at rest
Ere you fill them full of flowers;

Wait not for the crowning tuberose
To make sweet the last sad hours;
But while in the busy household-band,
Your darlings still need your guiding hand.
Oh, fill their lives with sweetness!

Wait not till the little hearts are still,
For the loving look and phrase;
But while you gently chide a fault,
The good deed kindly praise.
The word you would speak beside the bier
Falls sweeter far on the living ear;
Oh, fill young lives with sweetness!

Ah, what are kisses on clay-cold lips
To the rosy mouth we press,
When our wee one flies to her mother's arms,
For love's tenderest caress?
Let never a worldly bauble keep
Your heart from the joy each day should reap,
Circling your lives with sweetness.

Give thanks each morn for the sturdy boys,
Give thanks for the fairy girls;
With a dower of wealth like this at home,
Would you rifle the earth for pearls?
Wait not for death to gem love's crown,
But daily shower life's blessings down,
And fill young hearts with sweetness.

Remember the homes where the light has fled,
Where the rose has faded away;
And the love that glows in youthful hearts,
Oh, cherish it while you may!
And make your home a garden of flowers,
Where joy shall bloom, through childhood's hours,
And fill your lives with sweetness.

A WORD FOR THE MOTHER.

SEND the children to bed with a kiss and a smile;
Sweet childhood will tarry at best but a while;
And soon they will pass from the portals of home,
The wilderness ways of their life-work to roam.

Yes, tuck them in bed with a gentle "good-night!"
The mantle of shadows is veiling the light;
And maybe — God knows — on this sweet little face
May fall deeper shadows in life's weary race.

Yes, say it: "God bless my dear children, I pray!"
It may be the last you will say it for aye!
The night may be long ere you see them again;
The motherless children may call you in vain!

Drop sweet benediction on each little head,
And fold them in prayer as they nestle in bed;
A guard of bright angels around them invite,
The spirit may slip from the mooring to-night.

OUR MOTHER.

"OLD? oh, no! she can never be old,
Though threescore or more summers be hers,
And her life's purple garners now hold
The rich fruitage of seventy warm years.
There are lives that grow wrinkled with time,
And hearts that get callous with gold,
And young heads that are gray-haired with crime,
But our mother can never grow old!

"She is faded and care-bent, I know,
Like a sheaf that is laden with ears;
Her footsteps are halting and slow,
And her cheeks bear the traces of tears;
But her heart is all mellow and ripe,
With the ever sweet juices of love;
Her speech is a fair-coined type
Of the free-spoken language above.

"It is strange that we mark time by years,
And a name to each passing day give,
And say that life's ending appears
When we're only beginning to live!
Time may change, may cut down and renew,
Each season new scenes may unfold,
Things may please us—then fade from our view—
But our mother can never grow old!

"Old? old? no, indeed! she is young
As ever she was in her life!
The fairest and dearest among
All women, with loveliness rife;
Her soul looks abroad through its veil,
With a smile like the light of the morn,
And the dews of true feeling exhale
From the depths where her graces were born.

"And some day the angels will come
For this beautiful mother of ours,
And will bear her away to their home,
That is close by the Amaranth bowers;
And there, in her radiant youth,
Where the ransomed aye flourish and bloom,
In the region of sunlight and truth,
She will wait for her children to come."

CRADLE SONG.

A MOTHER sang beside her little child,
Who, knowing not the meaning of the strain,
Still gazed on her with eyes wide open mild,
And listened pleased with cadence and refrain.
"Only the pure in heart see God."
Those were the words the singing mother said,
As in the firelight laughing baby played.

From day to day this was her household hymn,
As shadows of the evening gathered there,
As through the twilight showed the homestead dim,
Her song wing-like did seem to cleave the air—
"Only the pure in heart see God."
It floated up to some altar place,
Where spirits gaze for aye upon God's face.

The mother's spirit passed into the boy,
Grafting upon his soul her cradle words,
As old birds teach their offspring to employ
Their tuneful throats to imitate the birds—
"Only the pure in heart see God."
As thrushes teach their young the thrush's lays,
She taught her deathless one a hymn of praise:

It bore its peaceful harvest to the child;
In all the thoughtful after years of life
It often stilled the raging unrest wild,
That frets the spirit in our worldly strife—
"Only the pure in heart see God."
It sometimes gave the wounded spirit rest,
When heavily with many cares oppressed.

It ran for aye a cool, life-giving rill,
Sparkling and sweet and hidden in the heart,

And sometimes seemed to overflow and fill
His life; sometimes it seemed to roll—
"Only the pure in heart see God."
A stream of brightness from a high, far throne,
Whose beauty was for him alone.

A MOTHER'S HEART.

A LITTLE dreaming, such as mothers know;
A little lingering over dainty things;
A happy heart, wherein love all aglow
Stirs like a bird at dawn that wakes and sings—
And that is all.

A little clasping to her yearning breast;
A little musing over future years;
A heart that prays, "Dear Lord, Thou knowest best,
But spare my flower life's bitterest rain of tears"—
And that is all.

A little spirit speeding through the night;
A little home grown lonely, dark, and chill;
A sad heart, groping blindly for the light;
A little snow-clad grave beneath the hill—
And that is all.

A little gathering of life's broken thread;
A little patience keeping back the tears;
A heart that sings, "Thy darling is not dead,
God keeps her safe through His eternal years"—
And that is all.

PATIENCE, MOTHER.

PATIENCE, mother; don't be weary
Of the restless little head
Now reclining on your bosom,
Sleeping now on cradle-bed.
Should the little head grow weary,
Sinking to a dreamless sleep,
Resting on a coffin pillow,
Then, oh mother, how you'd weep,—
Weep to think you'd been impatient,
And perhaps a bit unkind,
To the darling little baby
That had left you thus behind.

Patience, mother; don't be weary
Of the clinging finger-tips
Creeping round like tiny tendrils,
Nor the rosy, parted lips.
Should the lips be pale and silent,
Little hands be folded still,
Glad would mother be to have them
Clinging at their own sweet will;
For how very much you'd missed them,
None but mother's heart can say.
Rosy lips, how glad you'd kiss them—
Clinging fingers, feel them play.

Patience, mother; don't be weary
Of the baby prattle sweet,
Of the steady patter, patter,
Of the ever busy feet.
Should the tiny feet grow weary,
And the merry prattle cease;
Should they both be stilled forever,
In a never-ending peace,
Vainly then would mother listen
For a sound e'en half so sweet
As the cooing of an infant
And the noise of baby feet.

Patience, mother; don't be weary
Of bright eyes so wide-awake,—
Bright eyes full of love and laughter;
Sunshine in your home they make.
Should the sparkling eyes grow weary,
Close, no more to ope on you,
To wake no more with glad surprise,
Then what, mother, would you do?
Oh, gladly then you'd see their light,
Nor would wish they'd "go to sleep;"
In vain the thought, unheeded wish,
They can never wake nor weep.

Patience, mother; don't be weary
Of the loving little heart,
Clinging ever to its mother,
Fearing with her care to part.
Should the little heart grow weary,
Seek a Saviour's heavenly fold,
There, forever, with the angels
Shielded from the storm and cold,
Mother, you would weep with sorrow,
Thinking you had caused it pain.
Patient be, then, while they're with you;
Then you'll ne'er "regret in vain."

ONE LITTLE SONG.

If I could hear one little song
I heard long years ago,
And hear her sing who sang it then
In accents pure and low,
It seems to me no sweeter joy
A weary heart could know.

At times the soul's mysterious power
Brings back the melody—
Like distant chimes that rise and fall,
Like murmurings of the sea;
And then I hear, or seem to hear,
The song once sang to me.

I turn me from the present hour
Against the lapse of years;
And looking back to brighter days,
Through days of hopes and fears,
The olden memories fill my heart
And dim my eyes with tears.

I hear, and yet I do not hear,
The good old song of yore;
She can not sing who sang it then,
And ne'er will sing it more;
For light and life and love have gone,
As hope had gone before.

Oh! could I hear the little song
I heard long years ago,
And hear her sing as once she sang
In accents pure and low,
It seems to me no sweeter joy
A weary heart could know.

THE HOUSEWIFE.

What has this woman been doing,
So long since the morning begun?
I don't believe she can remember
One-half of the work she has done.

Dressing the dear little baby,
Combing his soft silken hair,
Putting him back in the cradle
To sleep and grow healthy and fair.

Doing the work in the kitchen,
Just what it happens to be,
Covering books for the school-room,
Ready for callers at three.

Mending and making and chatting,
Two or three children to teach,
If not the primer's first lesson,
Methods no others can preach.

That's what this woman's been doing,
Day after day 'tis the same;
Angels, oh, watch and defend her,
"Mother"—for that is her name.

IF ONLY MOTHERS KNEW.

If only mothers knew, she said,
How hungry children are for love,
Above each virgin little bed
A mother's lips would prove,
How sweet are kisses that are given
Between a rosy mouth and heaven.

If only my mamma would kneel,
As your dear mother, every night,
Beside her little girl, to feel
If all the wraps are folded tight,
And hold my hands, her elbow fair
Between my cheeks and her soft hair;

And looking in my dreaming eyes
As if she saw some lovely thing;
And smiling in such fond surprise
On all my hopes of life that spring
Like flowers beneath her tender gaze,
I could not stray in evil ways.

I would not wound the gentle breast
That held me warm within its fold;
My mother's love would still be best,
However sad, or plain, or old;
And even though the world forsake,
I'd love her for her love's dear sake.

MY BABY.

ALWAYS I rock my baby to sleep
When night comes on,
Some mothers only sit and weep,
Their darlings gone;
But my baby is mine, my very own,
And I am never left alone.

Who could take from the mother's heart
Her little one?
The twining tendrils may not part,
Nor be undone;
My baby is mine, my very own,
And I am never left alone.

Our Lord can hold in His embrace
Baby and me,
And I am wholly satisfied
That this shall be;
For baby is still my very own,
And I am never left alone.

Always I rock my baby to sleep
When night comes on,
Some mothers only sit and weep,
Their darlings gone;
But my baby is mine, my very own,
And I am never left alone.

BORN AT JERUSALEM.

ENGLISH child of Eastern birth,
Welcome to our wondrous earth;
Welcome, innocent blue eyes,
Opening upon Syrian skies;
Welcome, feet that soon will stand
On Judea's sacred land;
Bud from honorable stem,
Babe, born at Jerusalem.

Or, if of still older creed,
Ere the world of Christ had need
I should think of Rachel fair,
Hannah, who child Samuel bare;
Hebrew women, grand and calm,
Whose pure lives roll like a psalm
Down the centuries. Who like them,
Mothers of Jerusalem?

Little sweet god-daughter mine!
Thy fair unknown face will shine
Like the stars which shepherds see
Still, o'er the plains of Galilee;
Were I of that faith of old
Christians held 'gainst Paynims bold
I should say the Virgin mild
Specially on thee had smiled,
That the Mother of all mothers
Had loved thine beyond the others,
Sending such a priceless gem
To her, in Jerusalem.

And thy unheard voice will fill
Silence, like Siloam's rill,
Where the hills in purple hem,
Stand about Jerusalem.

Babe, thy future who can see?
But we bless thee, full and free,
Walk, where walked Christ's stainless feet,
In the Temple and the street:
"Holy, harmless, undefiled,"
Yet to parents human child;
Till thou walk with Him—and them—
In the New Jerusalem.

"A LITTLE CROWN."

WRITE it, O Angel! in the Book,
Among the lambs of my fair flock,
One more dear name shall be engraved,
By Jesus saved.

The angel paused and wrote it down,
Then turned and touched a glowing crown,
On which the precious sentence gleamed,
By Christ redeemed!

It was our lamb, whose name was there,
So precious and so sweetly fair
That oft we trembled as he dreamed
So near to heaven he seemed.

And if the angel softly came
And gently called his little name,
For beauteous grew his darling eyes
With heavenly ecstasies,

Ah me! we would have stayed the hand
Which led him to the beauteous land,
But troops of little ones came down
To lead him to his crown!

He went so sweetly to that throng,
We almost heard the welcome song
Of countless darlings gone before,
Unto the shining shore!

"OUR OWN."

If I had known in the morning
How wearily all the day
The words unkind
Would trouble my mind
I said when you went away,
I had been more careful, darling,
Nor given you needless pain;
But we vex "our own"
With look and tone,
We might never take back again.

For though in the quiet evening
You may give me the kiss of peace,
Yet it might be
That never for me
The pain of the heart should cease.
How many go forth in the morning
That never come home at night;
And hearts have broken
For harsh words spoken
That sorrow can ne'er set right.

We have careful thoughts for the stranger,
And smiles for the sometime guest;
But oft for "our own"
The bitter tone,
Though we love "our own" the best.

Ah! lips with the curve impatient;
Ah! brow with that look of scorn;
'Twere a cruel fate,
Were the night too late
To undo the work of morn.

FIRES AND HOUSES AND SMILES.

If the world seems cold to you,
Kindle fires to warm it!
Let their comfort hide from view
Winters that deform it;
Hearts as frozen as your own,
To that radiance gather;
You will soon forget to moan,—
"Ah! the cheerless weather."

If the world's a wilderness,
Go build houses in it!
With it help your loneliness
On the winds to din it!
Raise a hut, however slight,
Weeds and brambles smother,
And to roof and meal invite
Some forlorner brother.

If the world's a vale of tears,
Smile till rainbows span it;
Breathe the love that life endears;
Clear from clouds to fan it.
Of your gladness lend a gleam
Unto souls that shiver;
Show them how dark Sorrow's stream
Blends with Hope's bright river.

THE GUEST.

From out the great world's rush and din
There came a guest;
The inner court he entered in,
And sat at rest.

Slow on the wild tide of affairs
The gates were closed;
Afar the hungry host of cares
At last reposed.

Then through the dim doors of the past,
All pure of blame,
Came boyish memories floating fast—
His mother's name.

"Ah! all this loud world calls the best
I'd give," he said,
"To feel her hand, on her dear breast
To lean my head.

"I cry within the crownèd day,
That would be joy,
Could she but bear me far away,
Once more her boy."

Man's strength is weakness, after all—
He stood confessed;
None quite can still the heart's wild call,
None quite are blessed.

Across the face that knows no fear
A shade swept fast,
As if a following angel near
That moment passed.

The sacred silence of the room
Did softly stir;
A splendor grew within the gloom
Of her, of her!

Out to the great world's rush and din
Has gone my guest;
The battle flame, the praise men win
Are his—not rest.

Far out amid the earth's turmoils
A strong man stands,
Upheld in triumph and in toils
By unseen hands.

But who may lift with subtle wand
The masks we wear?
I only know his mother's hand
Is on his hair.

I only know through all life's harms,
Through sin's alloy,
Somehow, somewhere that mother's arms
Will reach her boy.

A MOTHER'S CARES.

I DO not think that I could bear
My daily weight of woman's care
If it were not for this,
That Jesus seemeth always near:
Unseen, but whispering in my ear,
Some tender word of love and cheer,
To fill my soul with bliss!

There are so many trivial cares
That no one knows and no one shares,
Too small for me to tell;
Things e'en my husband can not see;
Nor his dear love uplift from me
Each hour's unnamed perplexity,
That mothers know so well.

The failure of some household scheme,
The ending of some pleasant dream,
Deep hidden in my breast;
The weariness of children's noise,
The yearning for that subtle poise
That turneth duties into joys,
And giveth inner rest.

These secret things, however small,
Are known to Jesus, each and all,
And this thought brings me peace.
I do not need to say one word;
He knows what thought my heart hath stirred,
And by divine caress my Lord
Makes all its throbbing cease.

And then upon His loving breast
My weary head is laid at rest,
In speechless ecstasy!
Until it seemeth all in vain
That care, fatigue, or mortal pain
Should hope to drive me forth again
From such felicity!

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

THE rights of woman—what are they?
The right to labor, love, and pray,
The right to weep when others weep,
The right to wake when others sleep.

The right to dry the falling tear,
The right to quell the rising fear;
The right to smooth the brow of care,
And whisper comfort to despair.

The right to watch the parting breath,
To soothe and cheer the bed of death;
The right, when earthly hopes all fail,
To point to that within the veil.

The right the wanderer to reclaim,
And win the lost from paths of shame;
The right to comfort and to bless
The widow and the fatherless.

The right the little ones to guide,
In simple faith to Him who died,
With earnest love and gentle praise,
To bless and cheer their youthful days.

The right to live for those we love,
The right to die that love to prove;
The right to brighten earthly homes
With pleasant smiles and gentle tones.

Are these thy rights? Then use them well;
Thy silent influence none can tell;
If these are thine, why ask for more?
Thou hast enough to answer for.

SPRING WORK.

I AM cutting papers to-day, mother,
(Papers to cover a shelf),
And saving out bits for my scrap-book;
But unlike my former self,
With the thoughts that are grand and noble,
And the lines the poet sings,
I am saving some very simple
And decidedly childlike things.

For throned in her chair beside me,
Sits a wee one, dainty and sweet,
And I trust in the days that are coming
She will care these lines to repeat.

I think that in planning her life-work,
The same fair future I see
Which you saw in the long ago, mother,
When you planned and prayed about me.

I long to come home at the twilight,
And, sitting down by your feet,
Listen again to the Bible tales
You used long ago to repeat—
Of Adam, and Eve, and Abel:
Of Noah who heard and obeyed;
Of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
With the faith and love they displayed.

There was Joseph, sold into Egypt,
And Moses before the king,
And David, who slew Goliath,
With a little stone in his sling;
There was Samuel, called at nighttime,
And Jonah cast in the deep,
And many a dream and vision
Of prophets and kings asleep.

Then there was the wonderful story
Of the Child in a manger-bed,
Who marked the pathway to glory
With tears and blood that He shed.
Dear mother, that "old, old story"
Is the life of my life to me,
And I want to train up my children
To be all He would have them be.

Oh, a mother's mission is holy,
And she must be holy, too,
Or sadly fail in performing
The work God gives her to do.
So while I am sweeping and scrubbing,
And cleaning dust from the paint,
In my heart I am earnestly praying
To be clean of sin and its taint.

While the farmer goes to his planting,
The mother, by look and tone,
Is sowing in soil just as certain
To yield of the seed she has sown.
The work that she does may be lowly,
But angels are watching her life;
The love of the Saviour sustaineth
Each faithful mother and wife.

"WRITE THEM A LETTER TO-NIGHT."

DON'T go to the theater, concert, or ball,
But stay in your room to-night;
Deny yourself to the friends that call,
And a good long letter write—
Write to the sad old folks at home,
Who sit when the day is done,
With folded hands and downcast eyes,
And think of the absent one.

Don't selfishly scribble "excuse my haste,
I've scarcely the time to write,"
Lest their brooding thoughts go wandering back
To many a by-gone night—
When they lost their needed sleep and rest,
And every breath was a prayer—
That God would leave their delicate babe
To their tender love and care.

Don't let them feel that you've no more need
Of their love or counsel wise;
For the heart grows strongly sensitive
When age has dimmed the eyes—
It might be well to let them believe
You never forgot them, quite;
That you deem it a pleasure when far away,
Long letters home to write.

Don't think that the young and giddy friends
Who make your pastime gay,
Have half the anxious thought for you
That the old folks have to-day.
The duty of writing do not put off;
Let sleep or pleasure wait,
Lest the letter for which they looked and longed
Be a day or an hour *too late*.

For the loving, sad old folks at home,
With locks fast turning white,
Are longing to hear from the absent one—
Write them a letter to-night.

A MOTHER'S THOUGHTS BY HER CHILD.

O GOD of boundless purity,
How strange that Thou should'st give to me
This young and tender heart,
To train to walk in Thine own ways,
That he may end his mortal days
In glory where Thou art!

Alas! how slow, how hopeless, too,
Am I, this sacred work to do!
My utmost strength must fail.
Yet, Holy Spirit, if Thy power
Be given to me from hour to hour
I surely shall prevail.

O Gracious influence, to his heart
Give will to choose the "better part,"
Which none can take away.
By him, O helping God, be found;
To him in gifts of love abound;
Be with him every day.

And, God of grace, his mother bless
With prayer, and faith, and watchfulness,
Now that she has a child.
Let not her weak indulgence spoil,
Nor yet her stern, harsh manner foil,
This heart so soft and mild.

Help her in every act and word
To follow close her lowly Lord;
Be this her only pride—
That she may holy influence shed
Around this dear immortal's head,
And keep him on Thy side.

Then, when the last great trump shall sound,
And all before their Judge be found
To hear their sentence pass'd,
May he in glory then appear,
Receive Thy prize, Thy "Well done" hear—
A conqueror at last.

Yes, may this soul of rarer worth
To me than all the souls of earth,
But wear Thy diadem;

Then, through eternity I'll raise
A mother's song of unmixed praise,
To Thee, redeeming Lamb.

VERSES.

HONOR.

LOSSES on losses, fast they came;
Men said: "There's left him but his name;
But that is free from blot or blame."

Despairing, bowed with care and dread,
As if he heard, he raised his head.
"Thank God, I have my name!" he said.

SUSPICION.

A palace; gilded ease and glare;
Loud jests and laughter; banquets rare;
Dark hints of foul beneath the fair.

At daybreak, on a sleepless bed,
He moaned and turned his fevered head.
"I've all things but a name!" he said.

THE TICK OF THE CLOCK AT MIDNIGHT.

'TIS the tick of the clock at midnight,
Solemnly, startlingly clear,
Like the throb of a fevered pulsation
Made audible to the ear.
Through the house reigns a death-like silence,
The death-like silence of sleep,
While the fragments of time, like meteors,
Pass flashing across the deep.
From the coming eternity rushing,
They illume for a moment our sky,
But no power can stay their departure;
They touch us and hurry by.
They touch on the heart of the watcher,
And utter these words in his ear:
"Can ye not watch for one hour,
And our soul-stirring message hear?
We are God's messengers, speeding
With swift and invisible flight,
And we speak to you best in the silence
Of the quiet, dead-hush of the night.
Remember we carry our message
Of what you are doing on earth
To the bountiful Father in heaven,
Who endowed you with souls at your birth.
What are ye doing, oh, mortals!
With that glorious gift of a soul?
For what are your strongest yearnings,
And what is the longed-for goal?
Pleasure, and power, and riches,
Leisure and freedom from care—
Is it for these ye are striving?
Such striving must end in despair.
Like a butterfly crushed in the grasping,
So pleasure is crushed when caught,
And power must end in weakness,
And riches must end in naught;
While indolent leisure lies basking,
Sleepily, selfishly glad,
Till the adder of conscience stings it,
And the terror driveth it mad.
Soon the dawn will streak the horizon
And herald the fateful day;
Prepare! Lo, the kingdom of heaven
Approacheth! Watch and pray!"

PRAYER FOR SATURDAY EVENING.

CHAFED and worn with worldly care,
Sweetly, Lord, my heart prepare;
Bid this inmost tempest cease;
Jesus, come and whisper peace!
Hush the whirlwind of my will;
With Thyself my spirit fill;
End in calm this busy week,
Let the Sabbath gently break.

Sever, Lord, these earthly ties—
Fain my soul to Thee would rise;
Disentangle me from time,
Lift me to a purer clime;
Let me cast away my load,
Let me now draw near to God.
Gently, loving Jesus, speak;
End in calm this busy week.

MOTHERHOOD.

"HER lot is on you"—woman's lot she meant,
The singer who sang sweetly long ago;
And rose and yew and tender myrtle blent,
To crown the harp that rang to love and woe.
Awake, oh, poetess, and vow one strain
To sing of motherhood, its joy, its pain.

What does it give to us, this mother love—
In verse and tale and legend glorified,
Chosen by lips divine as type above
All other passions? Men have lived and died
For sisters, maiden queens, and cherished wives,
Yet, sealed by God, the one chief love survives.

Yet what is it it gives us? Shrinking dread,
Peril, and pain, and agony forgot,
Because we hold the ray of gladness shed
By the first cry from lips that know us not
Worth all that has been paid, is yet to pay,
For the new worship, born and crowned that day.

Then nursing, teaching, training, self-denial,
That never knows itself, so deep it lies,
The eager taking up of every trial,
To smooth spring's pathway, light her April skies;
Watching and guiding, loving, longing, praying,
No coldness daunting, and no wrong dismaying.

And when the lovely bud to blossom wakes,
And when the soft, shy dawn-star flashes bright,
Another hand the perfect flower takes
Another wins the gladness of the light;
A sweet, soft, clinging, fond farewell is given;
Still a farewell, and then alone with Heaven.

With Heaven! Will He take the tired heart,
The God who gave the child and formed the mother,
Who sees her strive to play her destined part,
And smiling yield her darling to another?
Ay, on His cross He thought of Mary's woe;
He pities still the mothers left below.

THE WAY WE GROW OLD.

A BROKEN toy; a task that held away
A yearning child-heart from an hour of play;
A Christmas that no Christmas idols brought;
A tangled lesson, full of tangled thought;
A homesick boy; a senior gowned and wise;
A glimpse of life, when lo! the curtains rise,
Fold over fold,
And hangs the picture, like a boundless sea—
The world, all action and reality—
So we grow old.

A wedding, and a tender wife's caress;
A prattling babe the parent's life to bless;
A home of joys and cares in equal part;
A dreary watching with a heavy heart,
And death's dread angel knocking at the gate;
And Hope and Courage bidding sorrow wait,
Or lose her hold;
A new-made grave, and then a brave return
To where the fires of life triumphant burn—
So we grow old.

A fortune and a gen'rous meed of fame,
Or direful ruin and a tarnished name;
A slipping off of week and month and year,
Faster and faster as the close draws near;
A grief to-day, and with to-morrow's light
A pleasure that transforms the sullen night
From lead to gold;
A chilling winter of unchanging storm;
A spring replete with dawns and sunsets warm—
So we grow old.

Old to ourselves, but children yet to be
In the strange cities of eternity.

THE CHILDREN'S BED-TIME.

THE clock strikes seven in the hall,
The curfew of the children's day,
That calls each little pattering foot
From dance and song and livelong play;
Their day that in our wider light
Floats like a silver day-moon white,
Nor in our darkness sinks to rest,
But sets within a golden west.

Ah, tender hour that sends a drift
Of children's kisses through the house,
And cuckoo-notes of sweet "Good-night,"
That thoughts of heaven and home arouse;
And a soft stir to sense and heart,
As when the bee and blossom part;
And little feet that patter slower,
Like the last droppings of the shower.

And in the children's rooms aloft
What blossom shapes do gayly slip
Their dainty sheaths, and rosy run
From clasping hand and kissing lip,
A naked sweetness to the eye—
Blossom and babe and butterfly
In witching one, so dear a sight!
An ecstasy of life and light.

And, ah, what lovely witcheries
Bestrew the floor! an empty sock,
By vanished dance and song left loose
As dead birds' throats, a tiny smock
That, sure, upon some meadow grew,
And drank the heaven-sweet rains; a shoe
Scarce bigger than acorn cup;
Frocks that seem flowery meads cut up.

Then lily-dressed in angel-white
To mother's knee they trooping come,
The soft palms fold like kissing shells,
And they and we go singing home—
Their bright heads bowed and worshiping,
As though some glory of the spring,
Some daffodil that mocks the day,
Should fold his golden palms and pray.

The gates of Paradise swing wide
A moment's space in soft accord,
And those dread Angels, Life and Death,
A moment veil the flaming sword,
As o'er this weary world forlorn
From Eden's secret heart is borne
That breath of Paradise most fair,
Which mothers call "the children's prayer."

Ah, deep pathetic mystery!
The world's great woe unconscious hung,
A rain-drop on a blossom's lip;
White innocence that woos our wrong,
And Love divine that looks again,
Unconscious of the Cross and pain,
From sweet child-eyes, and in that child
Sad earth and heaven reconciled.

Then kissed, on beds we lay them down,
As fragrant-white as clover'd sod,
And all the upper floors grow hushed
With children's sleep and dews of God.
And as our stars their beams do hide,
The stars of twilight, opening wide,
Take up the heavenly tale at even,
And light us on to God and heaven.

THE FOLLOWER.

WE have a youngster in the house,
A little man of ten,
Who dearest to his mother is
Of all God's little men.
In-doors and out he clings to her;
He follows up and down;
He steals his slender hand in hers;
He plucks her by the gown.
"Why do you cling to me so, child?
You track me everywhere;
You never let me be alone."
And he, with serious air,
Answered, as closer still he drew,
"My feet were made to follow you."

Two years before the boy was born
Another child of seven,
Whom Heaven had lent to us awhile,
Went back again to Heaven.
He came to fill his brother's place,
And bless our failing years;
The good God sent him down in love
To dry our useless tears.

I think so, mother, for I hear
In what the child has said
A meaning that he knows not of,
A message from the dead.
He answered wiser than he knew,
"My feet were made to follow you."

Come here, my child, and sit with me,
Your head upon my breast;
You are the last of all my sons,
And you must be the best.
How much I love you, you may guess,
When, grown men like me,
You sit as I am sitting now,
Your child upon your knee.
Think of me then, and what I said
(And practiced when I could),
"'Tis something to be wise and great,
'Tis better to be good.
Oh, say to all things good and true,
'My feet were made to follow you!'"

Come here, my wife, and sit by me,
And place your hand in mine
(And yours, my child): while I have you
'Tis wicked to repine.
We've had our share of sorrow, love;
We've had our graves to fill;
But, thank the good God overhead,
We have each other still!
We've nothing in the world besides,
For we are only three;
Mother and child, *my* wife and child,
How dear you are to me!
I know—indeed, I always knew,
"My feet were made to follow you!"

HOLIDAYS.

THE holiest of all holidays are those
Kept by ourselves in silence and apart—
The secret anniversaries of the heart,
When the full river of feeling overflows—
The happy days unclouded to their close,

The sudden joys that out of darkness start
As flames from ashes; swift desires, that dart
Like swallows singing down each wind that blows!
White as the gleam of a receding sail;
White as a cloud that floats and fades in air,
White as the whitest lily on a stream,
These tender memories are; a fairy tale
Of some enchanted land we know not where,
But lovely as a landscape in a dream.

WEATHER PROBABILITIES.

INS and outs; whims and pouts;
Ups and downs; smiles and frowns;
Falls of dolls; cries and calls;
Head on lap; gapes and naps;
All this together will make up the weather
Probable for our youngest to-day.

Shocks and knocks; tumbled locks;
Sulky looks for old school-books;
Rapid race; apes' grimace;
And stunning shout for school let out;
All this together will make up the weather
Probable for our zone to-day.

Fears and tears; crimsoned ears;
Flushing cheek; eyes that speak;
Shy and meek; a loving art
That finds its way to love's own heart;
All this together will make up the weather
Probable for our delicate May.

But all the roughest breezes stirred,
Are lulled to sleep at mother's word,
And every cloud in childhood's skies
Melts in the sunshine of her eyes;
With this sweet mother the blandest weather
Is possible for the children to-day.

DEAR LITTLE HANDS.

DEAR little hands! I loved them so!
And now they are lying under the snow—
Under the snow so cold and white,
And I can not see them or touch them to-night,
They are quiet and still at last. Ah! me,
How busy and restless they used to be!
But now they can never reach up thro' the snow!
Dear little hands! I loved them so!
Dear little hands! I miss them so!
All through the day wherever I go;

All through the night how lonely it seems,
For no little hands wake me out of my dreams!
I miss them thro' all the weary hours—
Miss them as others miss sunshine and flowers—
Day-time or night-time wherever I go;
Dear little hands! I loved them so!

Dear little hands! When the Master shall call
I'll welcome the summons that comes to us all.
When my feet touch the waters so dark and so cold,
And I catch my first glimpse of the City of Gold,
If I keep my eyes fixed on the heavenly gate,
Over the tide where the white-robed ones wait,
Shall I know you, I wonder, among the bright bands?
Will you beckon me over, oh, dear little hands?

THE TOYS.

MY little son, who looked from thoughtful eyes,
And moved and spoke in quiet, grown-up wise,

Having my law the seventh time disobeyed,
I struck him, and dismissed
With hard words and unkissed,
His mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then fearing his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darkened eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-veined stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with blue bells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I prayed
To God, I wept, and said,
Ah! when at last we lie with tranced breath,
Not seeing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly, not less
Than I, whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

KISSING THE CHILDREN.

KISSES in the morning
Make the day seem bright,
Filling every corner
With a gleam of light;
And what happiness he misses
Who, affection's impulse scorning,
Departs, and gives no kisses
To the children in the morning.

Many think it folly;
Many say it's bliss;
Very much depending
On whose lips you kiss!
But the truth I am confessing,
And I'd have you all take warning,
If you covet any blessing,
Kiss the children in the morning.

PAPA'S LETTER.

I WAS sitting in my study,
Writing letters when I heard,
"Please, dear mamma, Mary told me
Mamma mustn't be disturbed.

"But I'se so tired of the kitty,
Want some ozzer fing to do,
Witing letters, is 'ou, mamma?
Tan't I wite a letter, too?"

"Not now, darling, mamma's busy;
Run and play with kitty now."
"No, no, mamma, me wite a letter!
Tan if 'ou will show me how."

I would paint my darling's portrait
As his sweet eyes searched my face—
Hair of gold and eyes of azure,
Form of childish witching grace.

But the eager face was clouded,
As I slowly shook my head,
Till I said, "I'll make a letter
Of you, darling boy, instead."

So I parted back the tresses
From his forehead high and white,
And a stamp in sport I pasted
'Mid its waves of golden light,

Then said I, "Now little letter,
Go away and bear good news;"
And I smiled, as, down the staircase,
Clattered loud the little shoes.

Leaving me, the darling hurried
Down to Mary in his glee,
"Mamma's witing lots of letters;
I'se a letter, Mary—see!"

No one heard the little prattle,
As once more he climbed the stair,
Reaching his little cap and tippet,
Standing on the entry stair.

No one heard the front door open,
No one saw the golden hair,
As it floated o'er his shoulders
In the crisp October air.

Down the street the baby hastened
Till he reached the office door,
"I'se a letter, Mr. Postman;
Is there room for any more?

"'Cause dis letter, doin to papa;
Papa lives with God, 'ou know,
Mamma sent me for a letter;
Does 'ou fink 'at I tan do?"

But the clerk in wonder answered,
"Not to-day, my little man."
"Den I'll find anozzer office,
'Cause I must do if I tan."

Fain the clerk would have detained him,
But the pleading face was gone,
And the little feet were hastening—
By the busy crowd swept on.

Suddenly the crowd was parted,
People fled to left and right
As a pair of maddened horses,
At the moment dashed in sight.

No one saw the baby figure—
No one saw the golden hair,
Till a voice of frightened sweetness
Rang out on the autumn air.

'Twas too late—a moment only
Stood the beauteous vision there,
Then the little face lay lifeless,
Covered o'er with golden hair.

Reverently they raised my darling,
Brushed away the curls of gold,
Saw the stamp upon the forehead,
Growing now so icy cold.

Not a mark the face disfigured,
Showing where a hoof had trod;
But the little life was ended—
"Papa's letter" was with God.

IN THE NEST.

GATHER them close to your loving heart—
Cradle them on your breast;
They will soon enough leave your brooding care;
Soon enough mount youth's topmost stair—
Little ones in the nest.

Fret not that the children's hearts are gay,
That their restless feet will run,
There may come a time in the by-and-by,
When you'll sit in your lonely room and sigh
For a sound of childish fun:

When you'll long for a repetition sweet
That sounded through each room,
Of "Mother," "Mother," the dear love calls
That will echo long in the silent halls,
And add to their stately gloom.

There may come a time when you'll long to hear
The eager, boyish tread,
The tuneless whistle, the clear, shrill shout,
The busy bustle in and out,
And pattering overhead.

When the boys and girls are all grown up,
And scattered far and wide,

Or gone to the undiscovered shore,
Where youth and age come nevermore,
You will miss them from your side.

Then gather them close to your loving heart,
Cradle them to your breast;
They will soon enough leave your brooding care,
Soon enough mount youth's topmost stair—
Little ones in the nest.

A RHYME OF ONE.

You sleep upon your mother's breast,
Your race begun,
A welcome, long a wish'd-for guest,
Whose age is One.

A baby-boy, you wonder why
You can not run;
You try to talk—how hard you try!—
You're only One.

Ere long you won't be such a dunce:
You'll eat your bun,
And fly your kite, like folk who once
Were only One.

You'll rhyme, and woo, and fight, and joke,
Perhaps you'll pun:
Such feats are never done by folk
Before they're One.

Some day, too, you may have your joy,
And envy none;
Yes, yourself, may own a boy
Who isn't One.

He'll dance, and laugh, and crow, he'll do
As you have done:
(You crown a happy home, tho' you
Are only One.)

But when he's grown shall you be here
To share his fun,
And talk of days when he (the dear!)
Was hardly One?

Dear child, 'tis your poor lot to be
My little son;
I'm glad, though I am old, you see,—
While you are One.

CRANK AND PULLEY.

(MACHINE POETRY).

My family machine,
Oh, 'tis so hard to run;
I get it all in shape,
In order, one by one,
The cogs, the wheels, and rollers
In line, not one in flank,
I take the place of "driver,"
And try to turn the crank.

Oh, dear! how they do bother!
The Willie wheel won't roll;
The Bettie cog is broken—
Tom spike don't hit the hole!
I work, and work, and worry,
I turn with might and main,
And when I try to hurry
I telescope the train.

But hold! Have I not heard?—
Stop! Let me think—and pray.
Oh, yes, the cord and pulley;
Is that the "better way?"
It may be well to try it,
I'll see what I can do,
If skillfully I ply it
Perhaps the train will go.

Oh, happy thought! Oh, glorious!
Come, let me try again.
The pulley is victorious!
How smoothly runs the train!
The Willie wheel goes rolling,
The Bettie cog ne'er slips,
Tom spike just hits the hole in—
All go for—mother's lips.

I wonder if a patent—
No, no, it shall not be—
Let *everybody* have it,
The blessed thing! Just see!
With "cords of love" I move it,
The oil of grace I ply,
And oh! how I do love it,
As heavenward we fly!

FATHER AT PLAY.

SUCH fun as we had one rainy day,
When father was home and helped us play!

We made a ship and hoisted sail,
And crossed the sea in a fearful gale—

But we hadn't sailed into London town,
When captain and crew and vessel went down.

Down, down in a jolly wreck,
With the captain rolling under the deck.

But he broke out again with a lion's roar,
And we on two legs, he on four,

Ran out of the parlor and up the stair,
And frightened mamma and the baby there.

So mamma said she'd be p'liceman now,
And tried to '*rest* us. She didn't know how!

Then the lion laughed and forgot to roar,
Till we chased him out of the nursery door;

And then he turned to a pony gay,
And carried us all on his back away.

Whippity, lickity, hickity ho!
If we hadn't fun, then I don't know!

Till we tumbled off and he cantered on,
Never stopping to see if his load was gone.

And I couldn't tell any more than he
Which was CHARLIE and which was me,

Or which was Towzer, for all in a mix
You'd think three people had turned to six.

Till Towzer's tail was caught in the door;
He wouldn't hurrah with us any more.

And mamma came out the rumpus to quiet,
And told us a story to break up the riot.

"WASN THIS FATHER THERE?"

IN a pleasant, homely chamber,
On a sunny autumn day,
Sat a father and a mother,
With their little child at play.

Round about the room she wandered,
In her careless, childish joy,
Fondling with a simple pleasure,
In her hands a baby's toy.

"Well does Lillie love her playthings,"
Said her father, glancing down;
Then he told her a short story,
What he saw that day in town:

How a father to his office,
Brought, that morn, his little son;
Hoped to have him close beside him,
While his work was being done.

But the little boy grew weary,
Home and toys were far away;
And his smiles were changed to crying,
Long before the close of day.

Quietly did Lillie listen,
Till the story short was through;
Then a smiling look of questioning
Grew into the eyes so blue.

Had she understood him rightly?
Was the story told her fair?
Baby cries for vanished playthings,
Why, "Was not his *father* there?"

Oh! these wondrous, lisping accents,
How they fall like drops of balm,
Soothing all our restless sobbing
Into heaven's own blessed calm.

Still through mouths of babes He speaketh,
Who Himself a babe became,
And the human heart of Jesus
Evermore is still the same.

MOTHER'S WAY.

OFT within our little cottage,
As the shadows gently fall,
While the sunlight touches softly
One sweet face upon the wall,
Do we gather close together,
And in hushed and tender tone,
Ask each other's full forgiveness
For the wrong that each has done.
Should you wonder why this custom,
At the ending of the day,
Eye and voice would quickly answer,
"It was once our mother's way!"

If our home be bright and cheery,
If it hold a welcome true,
Opening wide its door of greeting
To the many, not the few;
If we share our Father's bounty
With the needy, day by day,
'Tis because our hearts remember
This was ever mother's way.

Sometimes, when our hands grow weary,
Or our tasks seem very long;
When our burdens look too heavy,
And we deem the right all wrong,
Then we gain a new, fresh courage,
As we rise, to proudly say:
"Let us do our duty bravely,
This was our dear mother's way."

Thus we keep her memory precious,
While we never cease to pray
That, at last, when lengthening shadows
Mark the evening of our day,
They may find us waiting calmly,
To go home our mother's way!

THE DUMB CHILD.

SHE is my only girl.
I asked for her as some most precious thing—
For all unfinished was Love's jeweled ring,
Till set with this soft pearl!
The shadow time brought forth I could not see,
How pure, how perfect seemed the gift to me!

Oh! many a soft old tune
I used to sing unto that deafened ear,
And suffered not the slightest footstep near,
Lest she might wake too soon:
And hushed her brothers' laughter while she lay.
Ah, needless care! I might have let them play.

'Twas long ere I believed
That this one daughter might not speak to me;
Waited and watched—God knows how patiently!
How willingly deceived.
Vain Love was long the untiring nurse of Faith,
And tended hope until it starved to death.

Oh, if she could but hear
For one short hour, till I her tongue might teach
To call me mother, in the broken speech
That thrills the mother's ear!
Alas! those sealed lips never may be stirred
To the deep music of that holy word.

My heart it sorely tries,
To see her kneel with such a reverent air,
Beside her brothers at their evening prayer,
Or lift those earnest eyes
To watch our lips, as though our words she knew,
Then move her own, as she were speaking too.

I've watched her looking up
To the bright wonder of a sunset sky,
With such a depth of meaning in her eye,
That I could almost hope
The struggling soul would burst its binding cords,
And the long pent-up thoughts flow forth in words.

The song of bird and bee,
The chorus of the breezes, streams, and groves,
All the grand music to which nature moves,
Are wasted melody
To her; the world of sound a tuneless void;
While even silence had its charm destroyed.

Her face is very fair;
Her blue eye beautiful; of finest mold
The soft white brow, o'er which in waves of gold,
Ripples her shining hair.
Alas! this lovely temple closed must be,
For He who made it keeps the master-key.

Wills He the mind within
Should from earth's Babel clamor be kept free,
E'en that His still, small voice and step might be
Heard, at its inner shrine,
Through that deep hush of soul, with clearer thrill!
Then should I grieve? Oh, murmuring heart, be still!

She seems to have a sense
Of quiet gladness, in her noiseless play;
She hath a pleasant smile, a gentle way,
Whose voiceless eloquence
Touches all hearts, though I had once the fear
That even her father would not care for her.

Thank God, it is not so!
And when his sons are playing merrily,
She comes and leans her head upon his knee—
Oh, at such times I know,
By his full eye and tones subdued and mild,
How his heart yearns over his silent child.

Not of all gifts bereft,
Even now. How could I say she did not speak?
What real language lights her eye and cheek.
And thanks to Him who left
Unto her soul yet open avenues
For joys to enter, and for love to use!

And God in love doth give
To her defect a beauty of its own,
And we a deeper tenderness have known
Thro' that for which we grieve.
Yet shall the seal be melted from her ear,
Yea, and my voice shall fill it—but not here.

When that new sense is given,
What rapture will its first experience be,
That never woke to meaner melody
Than the rich songs of heaven—
To hear the full-toned anthem swelling round,
While angels teach the ecstasies of sound!

LINES ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

BEHOLD a seraph soaring
From out our weary world;
In robes of white,
One starlit night,
With spirit-wings unfurled,
He took his flight
To the gates of light,
To make his dwelling there,
Seraphic songs outpouring
Upon the silent air.

Oh, how he loved thee, mother,
Thy bosom was his bed;
'Twas sweet to rest
On thy soft breast
The little weary head;
To feel thee press
With fond caress
The bright and radiant brow,
But the blessed "Elder Brother'
Will cherish "baby" now.

Life lay, untrod, before him,
The future all unknown;
How might the years
Have flowed with tears,
Till laughter changed to moan!
How might the strife
Of human life
Have brought his soul to harm!
But now a shield is o'er him—
The Everlasting Arm!

The paths of bliss unbounded
His feet already tread—
The heavenly fields
Whose harvest yields
The true and living bread.
On fruitful hills,
By placid rills,
The lambs of Jesus feed;
By heaven's wealth surrounded,
What can he ever need?

Dear weeping father, mother,
How could he longer wait
When Jesus calls?
From jasper walls
Swung wide the golden gate.
But he will stand
At God's right hand,
To wait and watch for you;
And there will be another
To bid you "welcome" too.

And so he left you, winging
His upward flight afar,
Till, through the night,
There shone the light
Of one more radiant star!
Through countless years
No bitter tears
Shall dim those lustrous eyes;
No sighs shall mar the singing
Beneath those cloudless skies!

SATURDAY NIGHT.

THE spirit's trailing garments, that have swept
Through all the week, along the dusty ways,
Catching assoilment from the worldly days,
Though oft aside the foot in 'voidance stept—
Gather them up to-night; they have not kept
Their earlier beauty. Thorny cares have torn
Their delicate fabric—fretting troubles worn
The 'broidered hem, the while the wearer wept,
And strove with vain attempt to walk apart
Where the clay touched not. Wherefore, weary one!
Loosen these work-day vestments from thee, lest,
Uncleansed by meditation's holy art,
Thy soul be found unfitted to put on
The pure, fair linen of the Sabbath rest!

GRANDFATHER AND GRANDMOTHER.

GRANDFATHER AND GRANDMOTHER.

BEAUTIFUL GRANDMAMMA.

GRANDMAMMA sits in her quaint arm-chair;
Never was lady more sweet and fair;
Her gray locks ripple like silver shells,
And her brow its own calm story tells
Of a gentle life and a peaceful even,
A trust in God and a hope in heaven.

Little girl Mary sits rocking away
In her own low seat, like some winsome fay;
Two doll babies her kisses share,
And another one lies by the side of her chair;
May is fair as the morning dew:
Cheeks of roses and ribbons of blue.

"Say, grandmamma," says the pretty elf,
"Tell me a story about yourself.
When you were little what did you play?
Was you good or naughty, the whole long day?
Was it hundreds and hundreds of years ago?
And what makes your soft hair as white as snow?

"Did you have a mamma to hug and kiss,
And a dolly like this, and this, and this?
Did you have a pussy like my little Kate?
Did you go to bed when the clock struck eight?
Did you have long curls and beads like mine,
And a new silk apron, with ribbon fine?"

Grandmamma smiled at the little maid,
And, laying aside her knitting, she said:
"Go to my desk, and a red box you'll see;
Carefully lift it, and bring it to me."
So May put her dollies away, and ran,
Saying, "I'll be careful as ever I can."

Then grandmamma opened the box, and lo!
A beautiful child, with throat like snow,
Lips just tinted like pink shells rare,
Eyes of hazel, and golden hair,
Hand all dimpled, and teeth like pearls,
Fairest and sweetest of little girls.

"Oh, who is it?" cried winsome May,
"How I wish she was here to-day!
Wouldn't I love her like everything;
Say, dear grandmamma, who can she be?"
"Darling," said grandmamma, "that child was me."

May looked long at the dimpled grace,
And then at the saint-like, fair old face;
"How funny," she cried, with a smile and a kiss,
"To have such a dear little grandma as this!
"Still," she added, with a smiling zest,
"I think, dear grandma, I like *you* best."

So May climbed on the silken knee,
And grandma told her her history;
What plays she played, what toys she had,
How at times she was naughty, or good, or sad,

"But the best thing you did," said
May, "don't you see?
Was to grow to a beautiful grandma
for me."

OLD SONGS AND NEW.

"Oh dinna sing thae jinglin' sangs
That tempt the graceless feet,
Wi' solemn words in daft array
Like guisers on the street!
But to the grand auld measures
That fill the kirks at hame,
Sing the sweet psalms that David sang
To strains that he micht claim.

"At least let thae licht sangs be still
On the holy Sabbath day,
Nor thrum sic evil dancin' rants
When to your God ye pray.
Ill do sic wanton thairms
Become the holy Name;
Oh, sound His praise in the grand auld
strains
That fill the kirks at hame."

Oh, Grannie, let the bairns sing
As fits their lichtsome mood,
Nor let the gloom o' Sinai cloud
Their gowan-buskit road.
Sweet were the auld kirk anthems
Where lyart elders knelt;
Yet thinkna Heaven disdained to hear
The laverock's gladsome lilt.

Oft hae our torn an' tempted hearts
Thrilled to the Psalmist's lyre,
And kenned the sins an' griefs our ain
That did his strains inspire.
But the sangs that pleased the Master,
When this cauld world He trod,
Were the glad hosannas o' the weans
That hailed Him as their God.

Bethink ye how our faith was wrocht
In persecution's fires,
When on the Covenant anvil stern
God fashioned out our sires.

The hills that drank their life-blood
Echo their martyr psalms,
Each misty moor their children till
Their rugged faith embalms.

But they hae fa'en on sunnier days,
Thae slips o' the auld tree:
Though Covenant bluid is in their
veins
Nae Covenant fires they dree;
Theirs are the laughin' blossoms,
The fragrant, sweet-blown flowers
O' the faith bedewed wi' the martyr
blood
On Scotland's heathery moors.

Then, Grannie, let the bairnies sing
As suits their gleesome mood;
Nor let our Sinai cloud the path
Their God wi' flowers hath strewed.
When David's waes beset them,
Like us, his psalms they'll sing,
But let the loud hosannas rise
That hail the Children's King.

DREAMING AT FOURSCORE.

She sits in the gathering twilight
In her well-worn rocking-chair,
With the snow of life's long winter
In the meshes of her hair.
She dreams of the little children
Who left her long ago,
And listens for their footsteps
With the longing mothers know.

She hears them coming, coming!
And her heart is all elate
At the patter of little footsteps
Down by the garden-gate.
The clatter of children's voices
Comes merrily to her ears,
And she cries in her quivering treble,
"You are late, my little dears!"

And then, they are here beside her
As she had them long ago—
Susie, and Ben, and Mary,
And Ruthie, and little Joe.

And her heart throbs high with rapture
As each fond kiss is given,
And the night is filled with music
Sweet as her dreams of heaven.

Such wonderful things they tell her!
A nest in the apple-tree:
And the robin gave them a scolding
For climbing up to see!
A wee white lamb in the pasture—
A wild rose on the hill—
And such a great ripe strawberr y
As Joe found by the mill!

She listens to all their prattle,
Her heart abrim with rest.
She's queen in a little kingdom,
Each child a royal guest.
Queen? 'Tis an empty title!
More than a queen is she:
Mother of young immortals
Who gather at her knee.

She brings their welcome supper,
And they sit down at her feet
Tired, and hungry, and happy,
And she laughs to see them eat.
Then she smooths the yellow tangles
With a mother's patient hand,
While she tells some wonderful story
Of the children's fairy-land.

Then the little knotted shoe-strings
Are patiently untied,
And the children in their night-gowns
Kneel at their mother's side.
Their voices are low and sleepy
Ere their simple prayers are said,
And the good-night kiss is given
By each waiting little bed.

Then a quiet comes about her,
Solemn and still and deep,
And she says in her dreamy fancies,
"The children are fast asleep."
Yes, fast asleep, poor mother,
In their beds so low and green,
Daisies and clover blossom
Each face and the sky between.

THE OLD MAN'S SONG.

Oh, don't be sorrowful, darling;
Now don't be sorrowful, pray;
For taking the year together, my dear,
There isn't more night than day.

'Tis rainy weather, my darling;
Time's waves they heavily run;
But taking the year together, my dear,
There isn't more cloud than sun.

We are old folks, now, my darling;
Our heads they are growing gray;
But, taking the year all round, my dear,
You will always find the May.

We've had our May, my darling,
And our roses long ago;
And the time of the year is coming, my dear,
For the long dark nights and the snow.

But God is God, my darling,
Of night as well as of day;
And we feel and know that we can go
Wherever He leads the way.

SIX AND SEVENTY-SIX.

Two faces on a card I see,
A New Year's gift of love to me,
A pretty childish ministry!

It were not hard, I think, to fix
Their ages solely from Time's tricks,
Without the "Six and Seventy-six."

"Maimie and Grandma," side by side,
And seventy years betwixt them glide—
A bubbling fount—an ebbing tide;

A morning beam—a sunset ray;
A bud—a blossom in decay;
A rippling mouth—and lips that pray;

A waxen brow—a furrowed face;
Defiant smiles—and looks of grace—
And contrasts more as more I trace.

The child sees seventy years, as far
Beyond, to her, yon distant star,
And marvels what their mysteries are.

These to the wearied eyes appear
A fleeting mist, a shadowy sphere,
And briefer than one waiting year.

Maimie and Grandma—Hope and Faith,
Translated by one sunny breath—
And this to me the picture saith.

"G'ANPA'S" NAP.

On the wide porch, thickly shaded,
One clear sultry summer day,
Sheltered from the heat, I rested,
Musing, as an old man may.

Stirring leaves of silver poplar,
Softly came a cooling breeze,
Bringing smell of fragrant clover
And the distant hum of bees.

Suddenly my dream was broken;
Sound of hastening feet came near,
And sweet, childish words, clear-spoken,
Fell upon my listening ear.

But I did not move nor answer
As I heard the merry words,
Sounding like the joyous twitter
Of a pair of happy birds.

"G'anpa, see! we've got some posies—
Nicest ones you ever saw!
Mamma gave us all these roses;
Why don't you wake up, G'anpa?"

"Guess he's sleep tight," whispered Gracie;
So they sat down side by side,
Softly playing there, till Daisy
Clapped her little hands and cried:

"S'pose we stick our flowers round him,
Play that he's our great big vase,
Then he'll be so s'prised to see them
When he wakes up—won't he, Grace?"

So, with low and earnest whisper,
And a grave, important air,
They adorned their sleeping "G'anpa,"
Stepping tiptoe round his chair.

Then at last their work was ended;
"Posies" stuck out everywhere.
"Gracie, don't he look just splendid
With those roses in his hair?"

Patiently, with eyes admiring,
They stood waiting near me there—
Gentle Grace and Daisy Darling—
Precious little loving pair.

Pretty soon their "G'anpa," woke up,
"S'prised" as ever he could be,
Seeing rose and yellow king-cup
Grow on such a funny tree!

And two happy little faces
Looked in mine that summer day,
So I pleased their childish fancies,
Loving as an old man may.

GRANDMOTHER'S LESSON.

The quilting bee was over,
The folks had all gone home,
And grandmother was sitting
By the fireside alone.
When the children came in softly,
And, clustering around her chair,
Waited a talk with grandma
Ere they said their evening prayer.

"We are each of us making patch-work—
All of us, old and young;
And the pieces are all provided,
And sent to us one by one.
And when they come to us folded,
And we don't know how to turn,
We must just give up our puzzling,
And look to Heaven and learn.

"Sometimes our work seems useless,
And with sighs of discontent,
We wish that something greater
For our life-work had been sent.
But there's One who watches our labor
With earnest, tender care,
And when we are trying to please Him,
He makes it wondrous fair."

"He will examine our stitches
When the hour of trial shall come,
And He will look to the motive
And help us to take each one;
And He judges us very kindly,
And allows for the falling tear,
That kept us at times from seeing
How to thread our needles clear."

"You will see that all your pieces
Were cut and prepared for you.
The light and the dark together,
With judgment unerring and true.
And the work that looked the darkest
Now seems the brightest and best;
That your eyes are no more weary,
But have entered the heavenly rest."

"And then upon seeing the Master,
And gazing into His face,
You'll forget all about your own work;
In His glorious work of grace.
And with praises to Him forever
Your heart will overflow,
Till earth's sorrows are all forgotten,
And its trials left below."

GRANDPA'S STORY.

A STORY? a story?
Ah, yes, my dear children,
Come, gather you closely
'Bout grandpapa's knee;
I'll tell you a story,
A sweet little story,
A story that happened
To grandma and me.

I'm old now—I know it,
My hair is all snowy,
And I've touched the full cycle
Of threescore and ten;
The story I'll tell you,
It happened, my darlings,
When I had a grandpa,
And I was "Wee Ben;"

And grandma, dear grandma,
Who sits there a-knitting,
Was fair-haired and dimpled,
A right pretty lass;
We were playmates, my children,
Your grandma and I were;
We were lovers as children;
Ah! how the years pass!

"The story?" Hallo, there
Is mist on my glasses;
It always will come, when
I think of that day;
It will go in a minute—
Hand grandpa his 'kerchief;
The story I'll tell when
I've wiped it away.

You see we were playing,
Your grandma and I were;
Were playing that we were
The "Babes in the Wood;"
And we said we were lost
In the depths of the forest,
And pretended to cry,
As lost babies should.

And I saw grandma crying,
And forgot she was playing,
And then I cried, too,
Hard as ever I could;
Then grandma laughed,
And I smiled through my crying,
And so we stopped playing
The "Babes in the Wood."

And all our lives through we've
Been working and playing,
And laughing and crying,
As we did in the game.
For when grandma has cried,
My eyes have grown misty,
And my smiles have all come
When grandmamma's came!

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER'S SPINNING-WHEEL.

Out of the garret,
Odd little thing, we bear it:
Out of the dusty, moldy gloom,
Into the sunlight-flooded room.
Dust is over it, heavy and gray,
Thick on the treadle, thick on the wheel,
And spiders have spun on it, day by day,
To mock at its old-time, busy zeal.

Smiling we linger,
Pointing with curious finger
As this or that quaint shape we see
In this last-century mystery.
But grandmother's face grows grave and pale,
Our jests are idle, our wonder lost,
This little wheel lifts up the veil
To her from the land of grave and ghost.

Younger and stronger,
White-haired and weak no longer,
She sees, wide open, the cottage door,
The ceiling low, and the sanded floor;
The roses that climb outside, with bloom
Half of the window space conceal;
And her mother, who sits in the tidy room,
Is spinning flax at this little wheel!

She hears the whirring,
Soft as a kitten purring,
And under and over the busy noise
The tender song of her mother's voice.
Her childhood's ways she walks again,
Her childhood's heart she bears once more;
Drops from her like a leaf, the pain
And burden of almost fourscore!

But for a minute!
Then, with a tremor in it
Of age and grief, her voice speaks low:
"She died just fifty years ago!"

Now no longer with spirits gay,
The novel and crude alone we see,
But wiping the gathered dust away,
Our tears fall on it reverently.

We think how tender,
With love and self-surrender,
Those busy hands their labor wrought
Upon it in time to loving thought,—
Hopeful and eager long ago—
While now in their folded peace they lie,
Heedless that the toil goes on, below
The dust of half a century!

Ah, if that spirit
Could hover once more near it;
Could out of the dead past come again,
Warm and living as it was then,
In the cosy household corner here,
Where stands the little old-fashioned thing,
How the children's children gathered near,
Would give it heart-full welcoming!

THE FAST MAIL.

GRANDMOTHER'S OPINION.

Letters? Four times a day,
And the postman never gets tired,
A rappin' an' tappin' an' handin' 'em in,—
Aye, it's for that he is hired;
Susan an' Eleanor watchin',
An' allers they've time to stop,
Whatever they 're doin', to read 'em—
Letters, fresh from the shop.

A letter's no consequence now.
You heerd from Jonathan's wife,
Ye tell me, to-day? What then?
Ye hear every week o' your life,
An' she at t'other end o' the Continent. *I* want to know
Where *she* gets the stuff to put in 'em;
That's what bothers me so.

A letter 's no consequence now.
They say that there's millions a day
A flyin' hither an' yon,
Thick as the robins in May;
A flyin' hither an' yon,
Like the snowflakes out o' the sky,
An' meltin' away as quick,—
Gone with the breath o' a sigh.

I tell you when I was young—
A slip o' a thing like Sue—
When this faded hair was brown,
An' these dimmin' eyes were blue,
An' up in the mountain land
Your gran'ther was courtin' me,
A letter was worth its weight—
Worth waitin' a bit to see.

Writ with a strong quill pen, an'
Writ from a thoughtful heart,
Not flashed from a point o' steel,
As sharp an' cold as a dart;
An' it told the neighborhood news,
Whose names had been called in church,
Whose barn had been sot on fire,
Whose will folks were tryin' to search.

It began with an "Honored Sir,"
Or a "Much Respected Miss,"
An' it didn't dare allude,
Even distantly, to a kiss;
But it hoped it found you well,
An' it spoke in guarded phrase,
An' a solemn sort o' style,
Like the minister, when he prays.

"Formal an' frigid," Susan?
Is that what you're pleased to say?
Let me have my word, my dear,
My time is passin' away;
Before these fast mail days—
Oh, you needn't begin to blush!—
Neither males nor females, child,
Were given to so much gush.

Robert, he went to the pines one
Spell—it was bitter cold—
Oh, those hunter-men were giants,
Believe me, stalwart an' bold;
He was six months gone, an' I only
Had one letter all that time,
An' I kep' it safe in my Bible,
An' larned it off like rhyme.

What's that? The postman again,
A rappin' an' tappin'? Pray
What is Willie a writin' for?
Two letters from him to-day.
Is it Katie is sick? Scarlet fever?
Dear lamb, I'm afraid, I'm afraid;
I have set my heart on my love,
On the darling, the sweet little maid.

We'll hear once more before night.
Oh, thanks to the Lord for His ways,
They are better, for some things, now,
Than they were in my early days.
When your soul is dark with suspense,
And your cheek with fear turns pale,
Then you lift up a song o' praise
For the hope o' the good Fast Mail.

"WAITING FOR MOTHER!"

THE old man sits in his easy-chair,
Slumbering the moments away,
Dreaming a dream that is all his own,
On this gladsome, peaceful day.
His children have gathered from far and near,
His children's children beside,
And merry voices are echoing through
The "Homestead's" hall, so wide.

But far away in the years long flown
Grandfather lives again;
And his heart forgets that it ever knew
A shadow of grief and pain,
For he sees his wife as he saw her then—
A matron comely and fair,
With her children gathered around his board
And never a vacant chair.

Oh! happy this dream of the "Auld
Lang Syne,"
Of the years long slipped away!
And the old man's lips have gathered
a smile
And his heart grows young and gay.
But a kiss falls gently upon his brow,
From his daughter's lips so true:
"Dinner is ready; and, Father, dear,
We are *only waiting for you!*"

The old man wakes at his daughter's
call,
And he looks at the table near.
"There's *one* of us missing, my child,"
he says,
"We will wait till *Mother* is here."
There are tears in the eyes of his
children then,
As they gaze on an empty chair;
For many a lonely year has passed
Since "*Mother*" sat with them
there.

But the old man pleads still wistfully:
"We must *wait for Mother*, you
know!"
And they let him rest in his old arm-
chair
Till the sun at last sinks low.
Then leaving a smile for the children
here,
He turns from the earth away,
And has gone to "Mother," beyond
the skies,
With the close of the quiet day.

ONCE AGAIN.

"LOOK up once again, dear grandma;
How pretty you are to-night!
Your hair is lovely, my grandma—
So soft, and silky, and white."

Bless the child! his words like a ditty
Keep singing low in my brain—
Though I'm much too old to be pretty,
They sound like a dear old strain.

I suppose it is very silly
That my eyes should fill with tears,
But he gave me a thought o' Willie,
And a time back, years and years.

My hair won my pet name, Golding,—
It was softly said that night:
"Look up once again, my darling;
How pretty you are to-night!"

But now I'm an old woman,
With my old eyes full of tears,
And longing to join my good man,
Home before me years and years.

GRANDMOTHER—A PORTRAIT.

A FACE on which the years lie gently,
Softening ever as they go,
As a stone is smoothed and brightened
By the river's ceaseless flow.

Eyes to which tears are no strangers,
For she often tears hath shed
Over burdens born by others,
Which she fain would bear instead.

And her hair is silver woven,
As though light were falling down
From the city she is nearing,
Just foreshadowing the crown.

And her feet, they ne'er seem weary
When they others' steps can spare;
And her hands are very busy
Lightening others' load of care.

And her smile, it cometh gently,
Like the moonlight falling clear
On some still, sequestered water,
Pure and sparkling, heaven near.

And her thoughts, they seem too holy,
And her gentle love too pure,
To see crime and guilt in others
Unless seeing, she can cure.

Oh, dear heart; the toilsome journey
Now is mostly overpast:
And the glimpse of heaven you give us
Will be part of heaven at last.

GRANDMOTHER'S PATCHWORK.

A GENEROUS basket piled to the brim
With odds and ends so quaint and queer,
Bright from the past, or age-worn and dim;
For they're gathered away from year to year.

As over them all her fancies rove—
These scraps of garments from friends and kin—
Like faces they seem which appear in a dream;
Ah, there's much unseen of life and love
With grandmother's patchwork knitted in.

For each has some precious story to tell
To the dear old eyes reading them o'er;
A tale of its own, that she knows full well,
Born back to the hallowed days of yore.

The children will crowd about her knee,
With eager ear for each history;
These old-time relics which oft they see
Are full of meaning and mystery.

They know just which is the piece of pink
Their father wore—her baby John;
The old lady smiles; "Only to think
How sweet and cunning he looked with it on."

And one, they know, is all upon earth
To tell of the little girl who died;
How oft they have gazed, and hushed their mirth,
And over its tender story sighed!

And here is something that's handed down
To tell what she in her prime has done;
The fine checked linen of blue and brown—
The piece *she* "colored, and wove, and spun."

There's Willie's apron, and mother's dress;
And the soldier-coat of brother Ben,
Who marched away from each loved caress,
But, alas! did not march home again.

This, you know, is a piece of the gown
Which grandmother wore on her wedding-day;
The children spread it reverently down—
"Please tell us about it again," they say.

For that is the tale they love the best—
How she started out on her bridal tour
To find a home in the great, wild West,
Where the wolves came howling around her door.

How they almost starved for the lack of food—
Then swam the ford for a bit of corn;
How they tracked the deer through the pathless wood,
And o'er the hills in the purple morn.

Then she sees herself with rose-wreathed brow,
In bridal robes a young girl fair;
The silver that lies on her forehead now,
In long dark ringlets of silken hair.

If, in her dreams, her dim eyes shed,
Over her needle, sometimes a tear,
'Tis not in sadness; but joy instead,
That God is so good, and heaven so near.

So over them all her fancies rove—
These scraps of garments from friends and kin—
For there's much unseen of life and love
With grandmother's patchwork quilted in.

AN OLD MAN'S VALENTINE.

"GIVE me a Valentine, Youth"—
And the old man's cheeks were aglow,
Though a staff was in his hand
And his hair was white as snow—
"Give me a Valentine—something nice;
The girl I love is beyond a price.

"One of the old-fashioned kind,
All sweet with the perfume of flowers;
With dear little simple rhymes,
And two lovers in rosy bowers:
With a timid hope and a thought of tears—
That has been my style for fifty years.

"This one will suit her, I think,
Her eyes, as these blossoms, are blue,
White as these lilies her hair,
Like this dove, she is tender and true.
Just such a Valentine—smiles and fears—
As I've sent her now for fifty years.

"No need for laughing, young men!
But laugh when you're seventy years old,
If the girl you love to-day
Is beloved of you seventy-fold;
Laugh if you've had, through fifty years' strife,
The wonderful joy of a faithful wife.

"Send her a Valentine, then,
As I'm sending my wife to-day;
Send her one every year,
For that is a true Lover's way.
God give you, young men, a wife like mine,
And you'll send her, I know, a Valentine!"

GRANDMOTHER'S NEW-YEAR'S LETTER.

I PROMISED to write to you, John, I know,
A full account of my visit here;
But, somehow, I can't feel settled yet,
Or used to things that are strange and queer.
Katie gave me a welcome kind,
And maybe her kiss came from her heart!
But there seemed a *something*, I know not what,
Despite her kiss, which kept us apart.

I saw her look at the gown I wore,
And the poor old bonnet upon my head,
And I *guessed* the thoughts that her proud heart felt,
Even before a word was said.
I can not fairly complain, dear John;
Maybe I'm homesick away from you;
But—though you may call me foolish, dear—
There is *something* which chills me through and through.

Katie's husband is tall and fine,
A wonderful business man, they say;
And I've noticed he never has time to kiss
His children, or join them at their play.
And, speaking of children, the little ones here
Are not like children when *we* were young,
We never mimicked our elders, John,
Or spoke to the aged with flippant tongue.

I haven't described my room to you,
It's a quiet room on the upper floor.
Katie thought it would suit me best—
"Out of the way of noise;" and, more,
"She doesn't disturb me through the day,
When people call, for she knows I'm old."
Yes, I am old; but my *wits are* strong,
And there *are* some truths which needn't be told.

This New-Year's Day I'm sitting alone
(For Katie is busy with friends, you see,
And, having so much to do and say,
She has no time to remember me);
But I can't help thinking of home and you,
And the kitchen fire, a-blazing high,
And the dear old year that has just gone out—
How we watched it *in*, John, you and I.

You are sitting now in the old arm-chair;
The first day of the year has flown;
And the twilight shadows, which gather fast,
Are shutting you in, dear John, *alone*.
But my city visit is almost done,
And my tired heart will know no rest
Till, safe in the homestead once again,
I lay my head on my husband's breast.

GRANDPA AND BESS.

Two bright heads in the corner,
Deep in the easy-chair;
One with a crown of yellow gold,
And one like the silver fair;
One with the morning's rosy flush,
And one with the twilight's tender hush.

"Where do the New-Years come from?"
Asks Goldilocks in her glee;
"Do they sail in a pearly shallop
Across a wonderful sea;
A sea whose waters with rainbows spanned,
Touch all the borders of fairy-land?

"Do all the birds in that country
Keep singing by night and by day?
Singing among the blossoms
That never wither away?
Will they let you feel as you hold them near,
Their warm hearts beating, but not with fear?

"And the happy little children,
Do they wander as they will,
To gather the sweet wild roses,
And the strawberries on the hill.
White wings, like butterflies all afloat,
And a purple cloud for a fairy boat?

"There sure is such a country,
I've seen it many a night,
Though I never, never could find it
Awake in the morning light:
And that is the country over the sea,
Where the beautiful New-Years wait for me."

"Where do the New-Years come from?"
Says grandpa, looking away
Through the frosty rime on the window,
To the distant hills so gray;
"They come from the country of youth I know,
And they pass to the land of the long ago.

"'And which is the fairest country?'
Dear heart, I never can tell;
Where the New-Years wait their dawning
Or the beautiful Old-Years dwell;
But the sweetest summers that ever shone
To the land of the long ago have flown.

"The New-Years wait for you, darling;
And the Old-Years wait for me;
They have carried my dearest treasures
To the country over the sea;
The eyes that were brightest, the lips that sung
The gladdest carols when life was young.

"But I know of a better country,
Where the Old-Years all are new;
I shall find its shining pathway
Sooner, sweet heart, than you;
And I'll send you a message of love and cheer
With every dawn of a glad New-Year."

The eyes of the dear old pilgrim
Are looking across the snows;
While closer nestles the merry face,
With its flush like a pink wild rose.
Dreaming together the young and old,
Locks of silver and crown of gold.

BEDTIME.

WHEN the lamps were lit in the evening
And the shutters were fastened tight,
And the room where the household gathered
Was cosy, and warm, and bright,
When the bustle of work was over,
And the children were tired of play,
It seemed to us that our bedtime
Was the pleasantest part of the day.

For grandmother had her knitting;
Click! clack! would the needles go;
The baby was snug in the cradle,
And mother had time to sew;
And we, in our little night-gowns,
Would clamber on father's knee,
And sheltered within his loving arms
Were as happy as we could be.

He could not sing; but he whistled
A tune that was sure to keep
The little ones very quiet,
And put the baby to sleep;
And whenever I want a lullaby,
The sweetest I e'er shall know
Is the one that my father always used
In the beautiful long ago.

Sometimes there were apples roasted;
And then there were nuts to crack;
And jokes to be told, and stories
That had a delicious smack;
And the longer we lingered, the harder
We found it to get away,
For to us the children's bedtime
Seemed the sweetest hour of the day.

But at last the word was spoken;
"Come, come!" the mother said,
In her quietest tones—"it is really time
That little folks went to bed;"
And we who were wide awake as owls,
And ready for any lark,
With mournful step moved slowly out
And into the joyless dark.

And long after we had folded
In slumber's serene embrace,
And with the angels of dreamland
Were floating through fairy space,
Dear father would come to our bedside,
And tuck us in, oh, so tight!
We'd sleep as warm as birds in a nest
All through the livelong night.

And when my bedtime cometh,
And the last "Good-nights" are said,
And with the rest of the children
I go to my narrow bed,
My sleep will be all the sweeter
For the touch of a loving hand,
And a Father's smile will greet me
As I enter the morning-land.

READ TO SLEEP.

FOR threescore years and ten,
Burdened with care and woe,
She has traveled the weary ways of men,
And she's tired and wants to go.

It has been so hard to live!
And even her stinted store,
It seemed as if fate had grudged to give,
And she wishes her need was o'er.

So, musing one afternoon,
Her knitting upon her lap,
She hears at her door a drift of tune,
And a quick, familiar tap.

In flashes a child's fresh face,
And with voice, bird-like and gay,
She asks, "Shall I find a pretty place,
And read you a Psalm to-day?"

"Aye, read me a Psalm: '*The Lord Is my Shepherd:*' soft, not fast;
Then turn the leaves of the Holy Word
Till you come to the very last.

"Where it tells of the wondrous walls
Of jacinth and sapphire stone;
And the shine of the crystal light that falls
In rainbows about the throne;

"Where there never are any tears,
(Find where the verse so saith),
Nor sorrow, nor crying, through all God's years,
Nor hunger, nor cold, nor death;

"Of the city whose streets are gold;
Ah, *here*, it was not my share
One single piece in my hands to hold—
But my feet shall tread on it *there!*

"Yes, read of it all; it lifts
My soul up into the light,
And I look straight through the leaden rifts,
To the land where there's no more night."

So the little reader read
Till the slow-going needles stopped;
And then as she saw the weary head
On the wearier breast had dropped,

Rising, she nearer stepped—
How easy it all had been!—
The gates had unclosed as the sleeper slept,
And an angel had drawn her in!

AN AUTUMN WHISPER.

LITTLE Daisy said one day
Since the autumn weather—
"Hark! I hear the angels all
Whispering together!
Grandpa, please to come with me,
Help me hunt and find 'em?
Guess they're in the corny tents,
Else they hide behind 'em."

Little Daisy, four-year-old,
In the autumn weather,
And her grandpa went a-field
Hand in hand together.
He unbound a shock of corn,
Daisy peered within it,—
"Oh! they whisper louder now!
See 'em in a minute!"

To and fro from sheaf to sheaf
Daisy flitted brightly,
And the friendly russet stalks
Waved their banners lightly.
Many were the mystic tents
Searched and prattled over,
Yet no wings she spied but those
Of a startled plover.

"Grandpa, they're here, I know,
But I can not see one;
Maybe I must wait for that
Till I get to be one.
But they whisper, oh! so sweet,
Hide-and-seek while playing!
Let us both be very still,
And listen what they're saying!"

On the fallen shock of corn
In the autumn weather,
Infancy and ripened age
Hearkened there together.
Oh, the golden autumn day!
'Tis the earth's perfection,
When she, dying, in her heart
Holds the resurrection.

Weary child the angel wings
Sees while sweetly sleeping;
Thoughts more blessed and as pure
O'er his soul are sweeping.

Daisy, waking from her dream,
Finds a glimpse of glory
In the aged face, and lisps:
"Grandpa's heard their story!"

Sitting 'mong the ripened corn
Lovingly together,
Daisy listens to the words
Sweet as autumn weather:
"Grandpa, when my curls are white,
And I'm done with playing,
Will the angels teach me, too,
What they're always saying?"

Snowy heads, whose garnered lives
'Gainst the Cross are leaning,
You can give to angels' words
More than angels' meaning.
Oh, how blessed to walk with God
Year and year together,
Having ripened sheaves that sing
In the autumn weather!

GRANDMA'S KNITTING.

'Tis the quiet hour of twilight
Which follows the set of sun,
When the toil of the day is over,
And the evening rest begun,
And the silence is broken only
By the ticking of the clock;
While grandma sits by the fireside,
Knitting a little sock.

The yarn flies over the needles,
In stitches of white and gray;
But her fingers only are working,
For her mind is far away;
And a vision of golden ringlets,
Of a snowy muslin frock,
Moistens the eyes of grandma,
As she knits the little sock.

Oh, oft have those fingers fashioned
Finest garments of old!
Oh, oft on that loving bosom
Have rested ringlets of gold!

For "grandma" then was "mother,"
And her own were the household joys;
And she held in her deep affection
The love of three darling boys.

Dear Charlie was lain 'neath the daisies
When his years but numbered two;
Fred fell in the battle of Vicksburg—
One of our heroes in blue;
But the babe of darling Louie
In the cradle she loves to rock;
And 'tis for the second Charlie
She is knitting the little sock.

No wonder that grandma sits musing
While the shining needles fly;
No wonder the seam and the turning
Are marked with a weary sigh.
Her work will be rounded and finished
At the striking of the clock;
And a crowd of tender memories
Knit into the little sock.

GRANDMOTHER.

And this is her room and her cushioned chair;
They seem of herself a part;
And here are her caps and her knitting work—
They look so like her, dear heart!

'Tis many a year since we laid these away
In camphor and sighs and tears;
And still I can hear poor grandmother say,
"Don't weep when I'm gone, my dears."

But nature is strong and the will is weak
And we wept, aye, wept full sore,
When the calm, sweet eyes that we loved so well,
Looked on us no more—no more.

And still I can hear her sweet voice
to-day,
And feel the touch of her hand,
As she blessed us all with a tender
smile,
Ere she passed to that other land.

Oh! the days have been sad and long—
so long,
Since grandmother went her way;
And now by the side of these faded
things,
I can only weep and pray.

But grandmother's God, is He not my
God?
And doth He not rule above?
Oh, yes! I will trust and smile through
my tears,
And henceforth look only above.

THREE BASKETS.

BERTHA'S basket; maiden Bertha,
With the merry dancing eyes,
And the brow whereon a shadow
Would be such a rare surprise—
What has she within this dainty
Shell of rushes, silken-lined,
Where so many maiden musings
Innocently are enshrined?

Gayly mingled ends of worsted;
Beads that glitter silver-bright;
Fleece of Shetland, light and airy,
Lying there in waves of white;
'Broidered linen wrought for pastime
In the dreamy summer hours;
And perhaps a poet's idyl,
Read amid the leaves and flowers.

Bertha's basket; mother Bertha,
Ah, serener light hath grown
In the thoughtful eyes; the forehead
Hath some flitting sorrows known.
In the larger basket looking,
Other handiwork we find;
Where the woman's heart, its pleasure,
Love, and longing hath enshrined.

Little aprons; little dresses;
Trousers patched about the knee
With tender art, where no keen critic
Can the mother's piecing see;
Flannel worked with skill and patience,
And an overflowing store.
Every size of little stockings
Always needing one stitch more.

Bertha's basket; grandma Bertha;
For the years have run their way,
And it seems, in looking backward,
It was only yesterday
That the maiden tripped so lightly,
That the matron had her cares—
Age slips on so gently, gently,
Like an angel unawares.

Grandma's work is contemplative,
With the scintillance of steel
Glean the needles, smooth with flashing
Off the toe or round the heel.
Leisure days have found the lady;
But her face is deeply lined,
And her heart is as a temple—
Hallowed memories there are
shrined.

As along the dusty high-road
Rise the milestones one by one,
Telling here and there the distance
Until all the way is done;
So a woman's working basket
Marks the journey of her life,
Working dearest work for others,
Whether she be maid or wife.

GRANDPA AND BABY.

OUT on the lawn, one summer's day,
I left my baby boy at play,
And smiled to hear his gleeful shout
And happy voice sing in and out
Among the arches of the trees,
Then die away upon the breeze;
While all the playful echoes stirred
With merry laugh and lisping word.

But when I missed the cheerful noise,
Nor longer heard the prattling voice,
I rose, and to the window hied,
And, looking hence, this vision spied—
Oh, memory! though thy name be pain,
Paint, paint that picture o'er again!

The western sun his glory threw
Along the sward of emerald hue;
Save where, perchance, in playful frown,
Some cool, green shadows nestled down,
And idly shifting with the sun,
Crept slowly eastward, one by one.

Beneath the elm tree's waving crest,
Where the winds tossed the birdlings' nest,
And where alternate sun and shade
Like changing fancies skipped and played,
The old arm-chair, secure and good,
With wide-spread arms, inviting stood;
And in its cushions, broad and deep,
Grandpa and baby sat asleep.

On rounded cheek and golden head
The sinking sun his radiance shed,
While on the grandsire's silver crown
A single ray dropped softly down,
And then, in benediction fell
On both, and wrapped them in its spell.

The breeze, in frolic growing bold,
Tossed up the rings of shining gold
On baby's brow, then with the gray
On grandpa's head, began to play.

In the worn palm, securely pressed,
One little dimpled hand found rest;
The other clasped a withered flower,
Culled, all at will, in Nature's bower.

Fixed was the look of sad content,
On the worn face, a trifle bent;
And forward drooped, to rest the chin,
My baby's clustered curls within;
While on the collar of his coat
The gray and gold together float.

Such tinting one might vainly seek
As slept on baby's lip and cheek;
But thin and pale the other one,
And sad and care-worn in the sun;
And so the evening shadows fell,
And deeper grew, but all was well.

The elm-tree boughs now gaunt and bare,
Are tossed about the wintry air,
While pale, wan shadows come and go
Upon the lawn, all white with snow;
But never more, at eve or dawn,
On garden-walk or grassy lawn,
May I, in vision fair, behold
That little head, with crown of gold,
Nor evermore, on summer day,
That other one, with crown of gray.
Aneath the dreary, drifted snow,
The silver head, and gold, lie low;
Yet evermore, in joy and pain,
Oh, memory! paint that scene again.

GRANDMOTHERS.

GRANDMOTHERS are very nice folks;
They beat all the aunts in creation,
They let a chap do what he likes,
And don't worry about education.

I'm sure I can't see it at all,
What a poor fellow ever could do
For apples, and pennies, and cakes,
Without a grandmother or two.

And if he is bad now and then,
And makes a great racketing noise,
They only look over their specs,
And say, "Ah, these boys will be boys!

"Life is only short at the best;
Let the children be happy to-day,"
Then they look for awhile at the sky,
And the hills that are far, far away.

Quite often, as twilight comes on,
Grandmothers sing hymns very low,

To themselves as they rock by the fire,
About Heaven, and when they shall go.

And then, a boy stopping to think,
Will find a hot tear in his eye,
To know what will come at last;
For grandmothers all have to die.

I wish they could stay here and pray,
For a boy needs their prayers ev'ry night;
Some boys more than others, I s'pose;
Such as I, need a wonderful sight.

GRANDMOTHER.

MOTHER of our mother dear,
How we like to have you here;
Sympathizing with our play,
Helping us our tasks to say;
Teaching us to sew and knit;
Helping Dolly's clothes to fit!
Always tender, good, and true,
Is it strange that we love you?

When from school we hurry home,
We're always glad to find you've come.
Mamma's happy; baby crows,
And pulls the glasses off your nose.
Little Nellie, three-year-old,
Tries to get your hand to hold.
Tempting goodies, hid from sight
By Biddy, now are brought to light.
And no good child has aught to fear
When dear old grandmamma is here.

NOT DIVIDED.

TOGETHER fifty years they trod
The wandering way of life;
Then slept beneath the same green sod,
Fond husband, faithful wife.

Their days to seventy years had grown,
And when he went away,
She made no wild and bitter moan
Above his lifeless clay.

But gently, as a summer day
Sinks to its beauteous close,
Her life and spirit ebbed away,
And into glory rose.

He died just as the morning beamed,
And she before the night;
A new eternal bridal seemed
The solemn burial rite.

Three generations of their name,
Proud fathers, bridegrooms blest,
And lovers in their earliest flame
Conveyed them to their rest.

In the low chamber gently laid,
And heaped their couch with flowers;
And in their spirits softly prayed—
"May such an end be ours."

LOOKING BACKWARD.

LOOKING BACKWARD.

THREESCORE AND TEN.

THREESCORE and ten! How the tide rolls on,
Nearing the limitless sea;
Bearing the voyager over life's flood
To boundless eternity,
On, through the childhood's sunny hours,
On, through youth with its golden flowers,
On, through manhood's ripened powers,
Till age appears,
With its crown of years,
And the time-worn mariner, sighing for rest,
Anchors at last in the port of the blest.

Threescore and ten! How the rolling years
Are checkered with sunshine and shade!
The calm chased away by the pitiless storm,
Earth's joy into sorrow must fade,
Spring with its bloom and perfume sped,
Fruit-laden summer quickly fled,
Autumn come with weary tread,
Bent with the load
Of treasured food,
And then stern winter, with frosty breath,
Throws over the fields the pall of death.

Threescore and ten! And if we shall reach
The bound to life that here is set,
How few of the comrades of early years
Around us will linger yet!
Father and mother, their journey is o'er;
Brothers and sisters, we greet them no more;
Our loved ones stand thronging the further shore.
They beckon us on,
They point to the crown,
And with longing hearts they wait
To lead us through the pearly gate.

Threescore and ten! And the snows of years
Are resting upon that brow;
But, as backward we glance o'er the way we have trod,
Before God our Father we bow,
And joyous we bring Him our song of praise,
His mercies have cheered us through all our days,
And we fervently pray that life's setting rays
Through love divine
May cloudless shine—
Melting away in purer light
That illumines the land which knows no night.

Threescore and ten! Stand firm in thy lot.
Faithful and true to the end;
Bending thine ear to catch every word
Of the message the Master doth send;
Wakeful thine eye, for far spent is the night;
Burnished thine armor, thou soldier of light;
Ready to march, for the day-star is bright;
Bold in the fight
For truth and right!

Thou a conqueror shalt stand
With the exulting blood-bought band.

Threescore and ten! And what shall we add
To measure the earthly strife?
How many sands are left in the glass,
Counting the years of life?
One by one they silently fall,
One by one till have fallen all,
One by one till thy God shall call:
"Thy race is run,
Servant, well done!
Faithful in thy Lord's employ,
Enter now into His joy!"

I'M SIXTY TO-DAY.

In the far away past, when with me life was new,
The dim, distant future arose to my view,
And the years seemed like mile-stones arranged on my way,
But I've passed fifty-nine and reached sixty to-day.

Looking forward, the youth scarce the path can discern,
But the eye glancing back sees each crook and each turn;
And now I see oft where my steps went astray,
But I would not retrace them though sixty to-day.

Though fortune her favors to me seldom sends,
I have wealth without stint in the love of my friends;
While my locks are yet brown with scarce one thread of gray,
And my step is elastic, though sixty to-day.

The past of my life often seems like a dream,
As I've mourned over loved ones that crossed the dark stream,
But the Comforter whispers, they're not far away,
I soon shall rejoin them; I'm sixty to-day.

The morning of life brought its sunshine and flowers,
The midday its labors and oft-needed showers,
But high noon is passed, and I watch down the way,
Knowing soon 'twill be sunset; I'm sixty to-day.

Yet I'll try while the day lasts to make others glad,
I'll help those in trouble and cheer them when sad,
I'll weep with the mourner and laugh with the gay,
And I'll keep my heart young though I'm sixty to-day.

LIFE'S WEST WINDOWS.

We stand at life's west windows,
And think of the days that are gone;
Remembering the coming sunset,
We too must remember the morn;
But the sun will set, the day will close,
And an end will come to all our woes.

As we watch from the western casements,
Reviewing our happy youth,
We mourn for its vanished promise
Of honor, ambition, and truth;
But hopes will fail and pride decay,
When we think how soon we must away.

We stand at life's west windows,
And turn not sadly away,
To watch on our children's faces
The noontide of sparkling day;
But our sun must set, our lips grow dumb,
And to look from our windows our children come.

Still looking from life's west windows;
And we know we would not again
Look forth from the eastern lattice,
And live over all life's pain;
Though life's sunlight be brilliant, its sunset is sweet,
Since it brings longed-for rest to our weary feet.

"THE DAYS THAT ARE GONE."

"Do ye think of the days that are gone, Jeanie?
As ye sit by your fire at night,
Do ye wish that the morn might bring back the time
When your heart and your step were light?"

"I think of the days that are gone, Robin,
And all that I joyed in then,
But the fairest that ever arose on me
I have never wished back again."

"Do you think of the hopes that are gone, Jeanie?
As ye sit by your fire at night,
Do ye reckon them o'er, as they faded fast,
Like buds in an early blight?"

"I think of the hopes that are gone, Robin,
But I mourn not their stay was fleet,
For they fell as the leaves of the red rose fall,
That even in fading are sweet."

"Do ye think of the friends that are gone, Jeanie?
As ye sit by your fire at night,
Do ye wish they were round you again once more,
By the hearth that they made so bright?"

"I think of the friends that are gone, Robin,
They are dear to my heart as then,
But the best and dearest among them all
I have never wished back again!"

HEARTSEASE.

SOUTHWARD still the sun is slanting day by day,
Skies that brim with gold and azure slowly change;
Beauty waxes cold and dim and can not stay,
Into tone and tint steals something ill and strange.

Threat of evil finds its way to every ear,
Lurks in light and shade and sounds in every breath;
From the pathless snow-fields comes a warning drear,
And the shuddering north-wind carries news of death.

Stealthy step of Winter near and nearer draws:
Locking earth beneath him, terrible with might,
Strides he from the icy zone without a pause,
Swift and sure and fierce, with ready hand to smite.

Dearest, when without the door he threatening stands,
Having rendered desolate the fair green earth,
And sent her happy birds to sunnier lands,
And choked with sullen snows her summer mirth,

We shall sit together, you and I once more,
Warm and quiet, shut away from storm and cold;

We shall smile to hear him blustering at the door,
While the room glows with the fire-light's ruddy gold.

How safe my heart keeps every memory sweet,
Holding still your picture, as you used to sit,
Ever lovely, full of grace from head to feet,
With that heap of snowy wool I watched you knit;

With the lamplight falling on your cloudy hair—
On the rich, loose bands of brown, so soft to touch;
On the silken knot of rose you used to wear,
On the thoughtful little face I love so much.

You remember, when aloud I read to you,
Sometimes silence intervened. You would not move,
But in your radiant cheek the blushes grew;
For you knew I paused to gaze at you, my love!—

Paused to realize my heaven, till with kind,
Clear, and questioning gray eyes you sought my face—
What a look! Its kindling glory struck me blind.
'Twas a splendor that illumined all the place.

What to us are Winter's blows and hate and wrath?
And what matter that the green earth's bloom is fled?
There has been immortal Summer in our path
All the happy, happy years since we were wed.

BEYOND THE HILLS OF SNOW.

THERE is a picture in my heart—
A little sunny face—
So sweetly framed in amber hair,
So full of childish grace.
A little form that idly leans
Upon a low stone-wall,
She does not heed the robin's song
Nor yet the brooklet's call.

A little foot-path, smoothly worn,
Leads to an open door;
The leafy lights and shadows dance
Upon the oaken floor.
The pine-trees stand like sentinels
Around that little home;
The sunlight warms no fairer spot
Beneath the sky's blue dome.

A day in summer, sweet and still,
The world seems half asleep.
The grassy hill-sides, toward the east
The shadows longer creep,
The sunlight lingers lovingly
Among the wreathing vines:
The shadows nestle soft and cool
Among the guardian pines.

The soft white clouds, like snow-clad hills,
Lie shining in the west,
A line of golden tracery
Marks out their feathery crest.
Oh, tender, dreamy, childish eyes,
So full of happy light!
The sweet blue sky on which you gaze
Is not more clear and bright.

What lies beyond those gleaming heights
The young heart longs to know,
What fairy regions hid away
Beyond the hills of snow.

To-day I rest my weary self
Upon the same old wall;
From out the far-off woodland glen
I hear the brooklet call.

Oh, hills and slopes! Oh, clouds and pines,
Oh, tender summer skies!
Where is the glory that ye wore
To childhood's trusting eyes?

The fairest spot on earth—and yet
I can but long to go,
As when a little dreaming child,
Beyond the hills of snow.

NEARING THE SHORE.

An old man sat in a worn arm-chair;
White as snow is his thin soft hair;
Furrowed his cheek by time and care:
And back and forth he sways;
There's a far-away look in his dim, dim eye,
Which tells of thoughts of the long gone-by,
For he sits once more 'neath a cloudless sky,
And in childhood merrily plays.

He rests his cheek on the head of his cane,
And, happily smiling, dreams over again
Of that home, the brook, the meadow, the lane,
Dreams all with a vision clear;
Then childhood yields unto manhood's place,
And he looks once more in his bright, bright face,
And down in the starry eyes he can trace
A love remembered and dear.

Then he wakes and sighs: "It seems but a dream
That comes to me now like a golden gleam,
Or the shimmering glow of the sun's last beam,
But 'tis pleasant to think it o'er.
That youth was so sweet, but now it is past;
Those days of love were too precious to last,
But over yonder their pleasures are cast,
And I am nearing the shore."

He is gliding on in his little boat;
O'er the calm still water they peacefully float;
But echo full oft brings a well-known note
From the land he has left behind.
But Time will row back for him no more,
And he gazes away to that other shore,
And knows when the voyage of life shall be o'er,
That his dream beyond he will find.

The seeds of youth, which in youth we sow,
Adown through the isles of the future will grow,
And shed on age a beautiful glow,
As they come in memory's gleams.
Loved faces will come to dimming sight;
Sweet words will echo in day-dreams bright,
And circle old age with their halos of light
As they mingle in beautiful dreams.

NOTHING TO DO BUT TO GO.

A wanderer I've been, and have traveled for years,
By the stage coach, the steamboat, the train;
I have known joyful meetings, have shed parting tears,
With friends I might ne'er meet again.
And I've learned—let my farewells be joyous or sad—
No haste or distraction to show,
But with baggage pre-checked, and with passage prepaid,
To have nothing to do but to go.

The loiterer, when over the iron-clad track
The train is heard coming apace,
For his ticket will clamor, and urge for his check,
In a whirl of impatient distress;
While others, more timeful, with undisturbed mien,
Will composedly pace to and fro,
Or, quietly seated, will wait for the train,
With nothing to do but to go.

Oh, thus—I have thought—when we're called to depart
For the land whence we never return,
May we feel we are fully prepared for the start
When the death-sounding note we discern.
With our ticket secured, and our cares all at rest,
No disquieting thoughts may we know,
But tranquilly waiting to be found at the last,
With nothing to do but to go.

THE OLD COUPLE.

It stands in a sunny meadow,
The house so mossy and brown;
With its cumbrous, old stone chimneys,
And the gray roof sloping down.

The trees fold their green arms around it,
The trees, a century old;
And the winds go chanting through them,
And the sunbeams drop their gold.

The cowslips spring in the marshes,
And the roses bloom on the hill;
And beside the brook on the pastures,
The herbs go feeding at will.

The children have gone and left them,
They sit in the sun alone!
And the old wife's tears are falling,
As she harks to the well-known tone,
That won her heart in her girlhood,
That has soothed her in many a care,
And praises her now for the brightness
Her old face used to wear.

She thinks again of her bridal—
How, dressed in her robe of white,
She stood by her gay, young lover,
In the morning's rosy light.

Oh, the morning is rosy as ever,
But the rose from her cheek is fled;
And the sunshine still is golden,
But it falls on a silvered head.

And the girlhood dreams, once vanished,
Come back in her winter-time,
Till her feeble pulses tremble
With the thrill of spring-time's prime.

And looking forth from the window,
She thinks how the trees have grown,
Since, clad in her bridal whiteness,
She crossed the old door-stone.

Though dimmed her eye's bright azure,
And dimmed her hair's young gold;
The love in her girlhood plighted
Has never grown dim nor old.

They sat in peace in the sunshine,
Till the day was almost done;
And then, at its close, an angel
Stole over the threshold stone.

He folded their hands together—
He touched their eyelids with balm;
And their last breath floated upward,
Like the close of a solemn psalm.

Like a bridal pair they traversed
The unseen, mystical road
That leads to the beautiful city,
"Whose Builder and Maker is God."

Perhaps in that miracle country
They will give her lost youth back;
And the flowers of a vanished spring-time
Will bloom in the spirit's track.

One draught from the living waters
Shall call back his manhood's prime;
And eternal years shall measure
The love that outlived time.

But the shapes that they left behind them,
The wrinkles and silver hair,
Made holy to us by the kisses
The angel had printed there,

We will hide away 'neath the willows,
When the day is low in the west;
Where the sunbeams can not find them,
Nor the winds disturb their rest.

And we'll suffer no tell-tale tombstone,
With its age and date, to rise
O'er the two who are old no longer
In the Father's House in the skies.

EYES.

SWEET baby eyes,
That look around with such a grave surprise,
What do you see?
A strange new world, where simple things
Engender wild imaginings
And fancies free?
A resting place that is not home,
A Paradise wherein to roam
For years may be!
Oh, placid, wondering baby eyes,
The mystery that in you lies
Oft puzzles me.

Clear, boyish eyes,
Whose fearless glance unconsciously defies
Trouble and care;
When babyhood is passed and gone,
What is it that you gaze upon?
A land most fair;
A sunny shore with pleasure rife,
And that great, glorious gift of life
'Tis bliss to share.
Oh, happy, trustful, boyish eyes,
Let sages envy, fools despise
The faith you wear.

The anxious eyes
Of manhood, slowly piercing earth's disguise,
Discover—what?
That life at best is quickly done,
That hopes fulfilled and wishes won
Are dearly got;
That shadows chased in headlong haste,
And golden fruit he strove to taste,
Delight him not;
Oh, restless, doubting, troubled eyes,
To learn in sorrow to be wise
In manhood's lot.

Dim, aged eyes,
Gazing across the wreck of broken ties,
What do they see?
Behind—dead leaves that withered fall,
A fading wilderness where all
Is vanity;
Before—to gladden weary sight,
A glimpse, a promise of the bright
Eternity.
Oh, dim, and tearful aged eyes,
If waiting till that dawn shall rise,
Blessed are ye!

TWO PICTURES.

I.

AN old farm-house, with meadows wide,
And sweet with clover on each side;
A bright-eyed boy, who looks from out
The door with woodbine wreathed about,
And wishes his one thought all day:
"Oh! if I could but fly away
From this dull spot the world to see,
How happy, happy, happy,
How happy I should be."

II.

Amid the city's constant din,
A man who round the world has been,
Who, 'mid the tumult and the throng,
Is thinking, thinking all day long:

"Oh! could I only tread once more
The field-path to the farm-house door,
The old, green meadow could I see,
How happy, happy, happy,
How happy I should be."

MY BIRD AND I.

THE day is young and I am young,
The red-bird whistles to his mate;
He sits the tender leaves among,
I swing upon the garden gate;
He sings that life is always gay—
"A day so fair can never die."
I laugh and cast my flowers away;
We are so weary, he and I.

Deep wading through the yellow wheat,
My sheaves unbound within my hand,
I sink, to rest my tired feet,
And noonday heat broods o'er the land;
The red-bird falters in his song—
We fear the day will never die;
The minutes drag the hours along—
We are so weary, he and I.

I stand alone; my work is done;
The bird lies dying at my feet;
There's promise in the setting sun;
The evening air blows soft and sweet.
My binded sheaves I lay aside;
The day is dead; I too must die.
When stars come out at eventide
We shall be resting, he and I.

WATCHING COWS.

WHEN we lived down in Mapledale,
You and I, dear brother Joe,
On the great farm below the mill,
Forty years or more ago,
And we watched the cows, long summer days,
Eating the grass and clover,
How long it seemed to us before
Our boyhood would be over.

No wonder now, we often say,
Summer days were longer then,
Our father, when the daylight came,
Called the boys as well as men;
And when the milking all was done,
We trudged, with feet bare and brown,
Out in the fields to watch the cows
Till the great, round sun went down.

Ah! when we walked off down the lane,
'Neath those broad-brimmed hats we wore,
How father watched us from the barn,
Mother from the kitchen door.
"Keep out an eye," our father cried;
Mother, "Mind, boys, where you go."
How very hard and slow it came,
The butter and cheese then, Joe.

'Twas steady work that watching cows,
Oft we sat down to complain,
And then, you know, the cows were sure
To get off into the grain.
We'd never seen the great world then:
Days at school had been but few,
But lessons learned in those green fields
Have helped us our long life through.

All work of life is very much
Like that of watching cows, Joe.
For, when we don't keep out an eye,
Grain is trampled down, you know.
And folks are some like cows, I've found;
They're always wand'ring over:
Thinking their own not half as good
As neighbor's grass and clover.

Father and mother long have lain
In the church-yard, side by side;
And we've traveled many a mile
From Mapledale, since they died.
But when I've strayed in paths of sin,
I've seen mother in the door,
And heard her say, "Mind where you go,"
Just as she did years before.

Oft, when I've grumbled at my lot,
Leaning on my neighbor's fence,
And, looking over on his side,
Wished I had his pounds and pence,
I've heard my father, from the loft
In our old barn, shout again,
"Keep out an eye," and looking back
Saw the cows eating my grain.

Well, you and I are getting old,
We'll soon be done watching, Joe,
For in that home beyond, there is
No trampling down of grain, you know.
There we shall all rest satisfied,
For each will love the other,
And no one want the place that God
Has given to his brother.

EVERY YEAR.

THE spring has less of brightness
Every year;
And the snow a ghastlier whiteness
Every year;
Nor do summer flowers quicken,
Nor autumn fruitage thicken
As they once did, for they sicken
Every year.

It is growing darker, colder,
Every year;
And the heart and soul grow older
Every year;
I care not now for dancing,
Or for eyes with passion glancing,
Love is less and less entrancing
Every year.

Of the loves and sorrows blended
Every year;
Of the charms of friendship ended
Every year;
Of the ties that still might bind me
Until Time to Death resigned me,
My infirmities remind me
Every year.

Ah! how sad to look before us
Every year;
While the cloud grows darker o'er us
Every year;
When we see the blossoms faded,
That to bloom we might have aided,
And immortal garlands braided,
Every year.

To the past go more dead faces
Every year;
As the loved leave vacant places
Every year;
Everywhere the sad eyes meet us,
In the evening's dusk they greet us,
And to come to them entreat us,
Every year.

"You are growing old," they tell us;
"Every year;
You are more alone," they tell us,
"Every year;
You can win no new affection,
You have only recollection,
Deeper sorrow and dejection,
Every year."

Yes! the shores of life are shifting
Every year;
And we are seaward drifting
Every year;
Old pleasures, changing, fret us,
The living more forget us,
There are fewer to regret us
Every year.

But the truer life draws nigher
Every year;
And its morning star climbs higher
Every year;
Earth's hold on us grows slighter,
And the heavy burden lighter,
And the Dawn Immortal brighter
Every year.

THE HOME OF MY HEART.

NOT here in the populous town,
In the play-house or mart,
Not here in the ways gray and brown,
But afar on the green-swelling down,
Is the home of my heart.

There the hillside slopes down to a dell
Whence a streamlet has start;
There are woods and sweet grass on the swell,
And the south winds and west know it well;
'Tis the home of my heart.

There's a cottage o'ershadowed by leaves
Growing fairer than art,
Where under the low sloping eaves
No false hand the swallow bereaves:
'Tis the home of my heart.

And there as you gaze down the lea,
Where the trees stand apart,
Over grassland and woodland may be
You will catch the faint gleam of the sea
From the home of my heart.

And there in the rapturous spring,
When the morning rays dart
O'er the plain, and the morning birds sing,
You may see the most beautiful thing
In the home of my heart.

For there at the casement above,
Where the rose-bushes part,
Will blush the fair face of my love;
Ah, yes! it is this that will prove
'Tis the home of my heart.

AMONG THE OLD LACES.

SHE spread them softly upon her knee,
The rare old webs of costly thread,
With here a border and there a shred
Of fabric filmy and fair to see;
"They once were lovely," she sighed to me.
"They are lovely still," I said.

She drew them near with the aged hand,
Whose ling'ring touch was a faint caress.
"You speak of the laces, child? Ah, yes!
But I was thinking"—she paused and scanned
The tiny flaw in a woven strand
With a half forgetfulness.

"Was thinking, dear, in a fond old way,
That a mother has, when she sits alone,
When plumes are left, but the birds have flown,
How long we treasure and fold away
Such small reminders of those who stray
From the nest so soon outgrown.

"Now this"—uplifting a tiny shred
Whose yellow mesh was an antique prize—
"Was fashioned under my loving eyes.
An infant crown for my son's fair head.
You scarce would think that? Ah! truly said,
My Willie has grown so wise.

"But these he wore on his christening day,
Above the dimples they fell like snow;
But lace will rust while the shoulders grow,
And honors fairer than these they say
He carries proudly, and yet I pray
He may wear them so purely, so.

"This leaf, wrought edge and the fleecy net
My Mary wore as she smiling stood
Where books were closed and her womanhood
Lay wide beyond. I had hoped—and yet
Since she rests sweetly, can I regret
The loss of an earthly good?

"My other daughters? Yes, one by one
They knelt for mother to drape this veil

With bridal blessing. My heart did fail
That last sad morn when the task was done.
Poor veil, how long, as the years go on,
Will you read me your thrice-told tale?"

She paused. I waited, and scanned her face,
The eyes were full of the far away,
And memory walked in the yesterday;
Sweet dreams had peopled the films of lace;
I read the token, and yielded place;
Forgotten—I need not stay.

"*THE BOYS.*"

ARE we "the boys" that used to make
The tables ring with noisy follies?
Whose deep-lung'd laughter oft would shake
The ceiling with its thunder-volleys?

Are we the youths with lips unshorn,
At beauty's feet unwrinkled suitors,
Whose memories reach tradition's morn—
The days of prehistoric tutors?

"The boys" we knew—but who are these
Whose heads might serve for Plutarch's sages,
Or Fox's martyrs, if you please,
Or hermits of the dismal ages?

"The boys" we knew—can these be those?
Their cheeks with morning's blush were painted.
Where are the Harrys, Jims, and Joes,
With whom we once were well acquainted?

If we are they, we're not the same;
If they are we, why, then they're masking;
Do tell us, neighbor, what's your name?
Who are you?—What's the use of asking?

You once were George, or Bill, or Ben:
There's you, yourself—there's yon, that other;
I know you now—I knew you then—
You used to be your younger brother!

"*DIE LIEBE WINTERT NICHT.*"

"No winter-time in love!"
The little child we kissed in years agone,
It went to sleep one eve,
And woke not when the morning touched its cheek,
Ne'er woke again to grieve.
It wears the wild-rose tint in its soft cheek,
It keeps its rings of gold
Above the pure-veined forehead, white as snow;
It ne'er to us grew old.

"No winter-time in love!"
The earth wears different blossoms every month,
And it is even so
With her who sits beside me, in her heart
New graces bloom and grow.
She is more patient than in years agone;
In place of the lush rose,
Deep-hearted lilies over "pearls" of peace
On quiet waters close.

"No winter-time in love!"
One hinted gently of the white hoar-frost
That gleamed upon our hair:
We smiled as one who keeps his secret well.

Oh, heart, how young you are!
How full of tender pulses, leaping quick
At thrill of any bird,
And answering to the patter of small feet.

"No winter-time in love!"
We call it winter when some cheek is cold,
Some cheek we loved to press;
Only a moment, then we lift our eyes
And tenderly we bless
Th' one who, walking in the garden of the heart,
Made an eternal spring—
There is no winter and there can not be
After love's entering.

THE WIFE OF MY YOUTH.

THE yellow light of day is spent,
And fading into gray;
And creeping shadows, silently,
Lengthen about my way.

A dampness gathers on the air,
And through my frame it sends
A chill that's coldest at my heart—
I know what it portends.

I know what lieth just beyond:
My failing eye discerns
The dim, mysterious vale, from which
No traveler returns.

I do not shrink, I do not fear;
I know that this must be;
The evening and the silent night
Bring welcome rest to me.

Yet 'twas not thus, alone, I thought
The hillside to descend;
But hand in hand to journey down
With a devoted friend.

I hoped her presence would beguile
The sadness of the way,
And make as pleasant as the morn
The evening shadows gray.

But hers is not the voice I hear,
Is not the face I see,
When she that bears my name draws near
To talk or walk with me.

Ah, me! 'tis not her love I need,
'Tis not for her I sigh,
As, wearily and drearily,
I journey down to die.

Oh, Thou that from the hill's high top
Didst in my sight ascend,
Leaving me desolate! return,
And cheer my journey's end.

My life's best love, my heart's desire!
All other loves grow cold,
As round my head and round my heart
The mists and shadows fold.

To thee, to thee I turn again,
With all my early truth;
Yearns not thy soul to answer mine,
Wife of my happy youth?

I miss thee more and more, as down,
With feeble steps and slow,
An old, a sad, a weary man,
Unto my grave I go.

MEAR.

I HEARD the words of the preacher,
As he read that hymn so dear,
Which mother sang at our cradle
To the ancient tune of Mear.

And I felt her angel presence,
As sung were those blessed words;
My heart with rapture filling
As sweet as the sound of birds.

I longed for the land of Summer,
Life's River, with waters clear,
For the calm, sweet eyes of mother,
Who sung the old tune of Mear.

Oh, tale of the shepherds watching
Over their flocks in the night!
Of the dear Lord, sending angels
Enshrouded in glory bright!

Oh, story! told in the Orient,
To each wandering shepherd's ear;
That story, sung by my mother
To the hallowed tune of Mear.

Oh, pure white Babe of the manger!
Thy story shall ever run,
Till redemption's work is finished,
All souls to God's kingdom won!

To-day, that e'er welcome cadence
Of song floated back to me;
Over the paths of my childhood
It lovingly came, all free.

I thanked the good All-Father,
For this memory brightly clear;
The saintly smile of my mother,
And her low voice singing Mear.

Ah me! the father has rested
Many and many a year;
The mother, who sang by our cradle,
Has gone to a higher sphere.

Brothers and sisters have parted;
Some live in the Better Land,
And some are waiting their summons,
Sojourners yet on life's strand.

I feel when we meet up yonder
Where cometh no sigh nor tear,
Our mother will softly sing us
The grand old tune of Mear.

THE OLD SCHOOL-HOUSE.

I SAT an hour to-day, John,
Beside the old brook-stream—
Where we were school-boys in old time
When manhood was a dream.
The brook is choked with fallen leaves,
The pond is dried away;
I scarce believe that you would know
The dear old place to-day.

The school-house is no more, John,
Beneath our locust trees;
The wild rose by the window's side
No more waves in the breeze;
The scattered stones look desolate,
The sod they rested on
Has been plowed up by stranger hands
Since you and I were gone.

The chestnut-tree is dead, John,
And, what is sadder now,
The broken grape-vine of our swing
Hangs on the withered bough.
I read our names upon the bark,
And found the pebbles rare
Laid up beneath the hollow side,
As we had piled them there.

Beneath the grass-grown bank, John,
I looked for our old spring,
That bubbled down the alder path
Three paces from the swing;
The rushes grow upon the brink,
The pool is black and bare,
And not a foot for many a day
It seems has trodden there.

I took the old blind road, John,
That wandered up the hill—
'Tis darker than it used to be,
And seems so lone and still:
The birds yet sing upon the boughs
Where once the sweet grapes hung,
But not a voice of humankind
Where all our voices rung.

I sat me on the fence, John,
That lives as in old time,
The same half panel in the path
We used so oft to climb,
And thought how, o'er the bars of life,
Our playmates had passed on,
And left me counting on the spot
The faces that were gone.

GAINS AND LOSSES.

THE twilight deepening fast
Enwrapped me, ruled me, with its shadowy spell—

Cares half forgotten—griefs whose pain had passed—
Losses once mourned—I knew the phantoms well,
Stole back like noiseless ghosts from out a tomb,
And thronged my musing heart, my quiet room.

Came faces fondly loved,
Beneath their coffin-lids long shut away—
And others, fair, despite their falsehood proved—
Dead hopes—dead dreams—these swelled the long array—
Dim spectral shapes of joys long craved, denied,
Like beggars famishing and hungry-eyed.

Until at last I said:
"If I might but forget! might blot from sight
This useless past—might bid its shrouded dead
To haunt me nevermore, by day or night—
Might be made free of memories, whose chain,
Heavier with years, can bring me naught but pain.

"I *need* forgetfulness!
The 'sorrow's crown' of which the poet sings,
My aching temples heavily doth press,
And added thorns methinks the future brings;
Then let me at some lethe drink my fill,
And say to memory (if not 'Peace'), 'Be still.'"

The words were scarcely said
When a white angel rustled in the gloom,
And as with sudden awe I bent my head
His soft clear accents floated through my room,
So strangely pitiful, I hear them yet—
And thus he spake: "Wouldst thou indeed *forget?*

"Forget thy many crosses—
Thy dark despondent days—thy bitter tears—
The lonely hours that followed grievous losses—
The burthens of the slowly gliding years—
Dead hopes and disappointed dreams—ah me!
Forget all these? how *poor* then wouldst thou be!

"Canst thou forget a grief,
And yet remember how God's grace was sent
To comfort and to keep thee? On each leaf
Of thy life's record tears and smiles are blent
So closely that in blotting out the *pain*
Thou must efface the *peace*, thy greater gain.

"For He who knows thee best,
And knowing, loves thee with a love divine,
Has given Memory for thy life-long guest—
Canst thou not trust His tender discipline?
Or wilt thou, wayward, faithless, tempt e'en yet
Life's saddest doom—to *lose* and then *forget?*

"From heavenly heights some day
Thou shalt look back, serene, on present pain,
And then, remembering all the cross-marked way,
Shalt learn how losses widen into gain—
How the dear Master's love and tender care
Held back the bud to give the blossom fair!"

Then from my sight he passed,
The shining one—and all that dusky place
Shone with soft gleams from robe and feature cast.
The twilight wore a newer, sweeter grace—
And, like a strain of heavenly music, stole
A calm deep peace upon my wearied soul.

THE OLD CHESTS IN THE GARRET.

Up in the garret one rainy day,
Where the rafters were hung with the cobwebs gray,
Where the dust lay thick on chest and board,
Where the wind up great wide chimneys roared,
I came to think awhile.

Round about the room in a row,
Were chests of treasures of long ago:
Quaint old fans of sandal-wood,
Silks that alone in their glory stood,
On some day long passed by.

India muslins fine and old,
Costly lace as yellow as gold,
Satin with its silvery sheen,
Strings of pearls fit for a queen,
Carefully stored away.

Into my fancy a picture came,
Of royal knight, of stately dame,
Of laughing eyes, of glossy curls
Fastened back with these strings of pearls,
Some by-gone Christmas eve.

I closed the chest-lid with a sigh,
And hung the key on a rafter nigh,
For many a Christmas eve had gone,
Passed had many a Christmas morn,
While they slept under the snow.

Resting there, for their work was done,
Of deeds, of words, and honor won;
Those in memory will stay,
Though lord and lady have passed away,
And treasures fall to dust.

I opened another chest to find
Packs of letters with ribbons twined,
Some of the ribbons were bright and gay,
Others were black and seemed to say,
Sad news was with them bound.

One letter writ in a manly hand,
Came over the sea from a foreign land,
Telling when the ship should sail;
But the vessel sank in a fearful gale
And the sailor came no more.

I started, for the tears fell fast
O'er this reminder of the past,
But softly speaking in my ear
An angel's voice I seemed to hear,
And this it said to me:

"Weep not for a past which is over and gone,
The friends whose memory you mourn
Safe through the storms of life's rough sea
By the dear Christ's side are awaiting thee,
Soon shalt thou meet them there."

The dusky garret with peace was filled,
The pattering rain on the roof was stilled,
The sunbeams flickering through the room,
Came like light from my Father's home,
Or a smile from loved ones gone.

THE DEPARTED.

One dear friend after another
Is called away from earth,
And leaves in our hearts a shadow
Of loneliness and dearth.

We think, with a wistful longing,
Of the ever-gathering band
Who await our own home-coming
In the blessed sinless land.

We stand around the death-bed
Of the friend who has passed away,
And our bitter tears are falling
O'er his unconscious clay.

But oh, where our friends are dwelling,
With what delight they press
To greet the dear new-comer
With joy and tenderness!

What comfort after sorrow,
What rest from life's long pain,
When he knows that death is over,
When he finds his own again;

His, all that the years hath taken,
Of memory, joy, or power,
And his life's fair tree stands laden
With all its fruit and flower!

The friends whom death had taken,
Of whom the thought for years
Had been steeped in mortal sadness,
Deep pain, and lonely tears,

They now are the dear home-circle,
Whose smiles make glad his day,
The halo of sorrow around them
Has melted in light away.

Ah me! in their boundless gladness,
In their infinite content,
Does one longing for us mingle?
Is one sigh for absence blent?

Nay, dear ones true and tender,
Not a shadow of our woe
Can dim your heavenly sunshine;
We are glad to have it so.

But let our memory enter
Into your thankful song,
For our hearts are yours and love you,
And we shall come ere long.

"BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN."

ANCE I had a wife o' my ain,
An ingle warm and bright,
A candle in my window set
To cheer me hame at night.
And now the wife's in heaven aboon,
An' through its opened door,
Heaven's glory's hauding up my heart,
Across earth's lanely moor.

Ance I had a bit bonnie farm,
And watched for rain and shine,
But noo I look on a' the land,
And a' the land seems mine.
And in the vera sun i' the lift
I feel to have my share;
There's something in me sib to all
That's living anywhere.

An' thochts come ben, I canna tell;
In talk they'd only look
Like butterflies wi' pins stuck through
An' fastened in a book.
I'd rather let 'em flutter out
On God's own bonnie trees;
The eyes may aften ha' a glimpse
O' what hands shouldna seize.

There's depth in life man canna sound,
There's a height he canna reach,
But there's a Light that shines for all,
And There's a Way for each.
And turning to the right is joy,
And to the wrong is hell,
Yet there's one thing he canna miss,
An' that is God Himsel'.

NOT LOST.

"THE flowers are here, and violet eyes
Are blue as summer's sunny skies;
There comes a fragrance as we pass,
From blossoms hidden in the grass,
And daisies star the meadows green,
My love will now grow glad, I ween."
"The flowers but creep above the dead,
And hide my flower," was all she said.

"But see, the birds have come again,
Their songs will charm away your pain;
In leafy bowers new nests are made,
New madrigals ring through the shade.
You can not now be sad when from
Each bower such merry greetings come."
"Ah, me! their songs but pierce my breast,
As weep I o'er my empty nest."

"But it is now on hillsides green
That flocks of snow-white lambs are seen."
"Speak not of lambs," she sadly said.
"The lamb that on my love was fed
Has wandered from the fold, while I
Out in the dark can only cry,
I would not see a happy fold
While my one lamb lies in the cold."

"But there are children everywhere;
Can they not share your love and care?"
"Ah, me! each little child I kiss
Reminds me of my own lost bliss,
And gaze I in each baby face
In vain my darling's looks to trace.
Oh, no!" she sobbed, with bitter moan,
"I want my own! I want my own!"

"I can not bear the flowers: they bloom
For me but over one small tomb;
The birds but mock with empty glee
One voice forever still for me;
The very sunshine on the floor
But makes me miss my sunbeam more.
How can my aching heart throb on,
When what it beat for now is gone?"

Poor heart! I see now why you break;
You thought that our dear Lord could take
Away what He had meant to be
Your own through all eternity.
They do not know a mother's heart—
Who knows but God, our sweet, sad part?—
That say, when our sweet bird has flown,
"The child belongs to God alone."

You need not give up love, oh, no;
God does not mock a mother so:
The earth may claim the robe of white
Which waving green hides from your sight;
But not an angel pure that sings
Before the Throne on earthward wings,
On acts of love, belongs more true
To God than that, dear child, to you.

Dear heart, look up, for you have given
One more to sing the song of heaven.
'Tis happiness to feel upon
Your breast a soul that is your own;
But it is deeper bliss to know,
While angels watch a blossom grow
Fairer and sweeter every day,
"It is her child," they fondly say.

Oh! it is wealth to have your best
Safe from life's sorrow and unrest;
Nor need you lose your treasure while
She dwell's beneath the Father's smile;
For God's bright home is not so far,
And near you like a guiding star,
Your angel child her wings will fold,
And open wide the gates of gold.

COMING BACK.

THEY say, if our beloved dead
Should seek the old, familiar place,
Some stranger would be there instead,
And they would find no welcoming face.

I can not tell how it might be
In other homes; but this I know,
Could my lost darling come to me,
That she would never find it so.

Twelve times the flowers have come and gone,
Twelve times the winter winds have blown,
The while her peaceful rest went on;
And I have learned to live alone.

Have slowly learned from day to day,
In all life's tasks to bear my part;
But whether grave or whether gay,
I hide her memory in my heart.

And if my darling comes to share
My pleasant fireside warm and bright,
She still will find her empty chair,
Where it has waited day and night.

Fond, faithful love has blessed my way,
And friends are round me, true and tried,
They have their places; hers to-day
Is empty as the day she died.

How would I spring with bated breath,
And joy too deep for word or sign,
To take my darling home from death,
And once again to call her mine.

I dare not dream the blissful dream,
It fills my heart with wild unrest;
Where yonder cold, white marbles gleam,
She still must slumber; God knows best.

But this I know, that those who say
Our best beloved would find no place,
Have never hungered, every day,
Through years and years, for one dear face.

"IF WE'D THOUGHT."

If we'd thought at our last meeting
With the friend we loved so dear,
By his grave we'd soon be standing,
Dropping down the silent tear,
Would that word we spoke so lightly
Have been uttered by us then?
Would that in our silent sorrow
We could call it back again!

If we'd thought that soon a parting
Would us sever far and wide,
That some of the gladsome faces
Would be soon across the tide,
Would the hasty word and action,
Would the satire sharp and keen
From our lips have ever fallen,
Or the action e'er been seen?

If we'd thought the friendly counsel
Was the last we e'er should hear,
Would we then have scoffed so lightly?
Let our heedlessness appear?
If we'd thought the kind inquiry
Soon would cease forevermore,
Would it then have been a trouble,
Would we then have wished it o'er?

If we'd thought that act of kindness
Was the last our friend should seek,
Would we have by cruel harshness
Brought the blushes to his cheek?
If we'd thought our heartless folly
Would have left so deep a sore,
Would we then have spoken rudely?
Would we not have hushed it o'er?

If we'd thought—alas! the sorrows
That the words awaken now:
If we'd thought—ah! then the wrinkles
Would be fewer on the brow.
"If we'd thought that death was coming,"
Will that be our latest cry?
God forbid! we know He's coming,
Let us think—He draweth nigh!

THE TWO LIGHTS.

"'When I'm a man!' is the poetry of youth,
'When I was young!' is the poetry of old age."

"When I'm a man," the stripling cries,
And strives the coming years to scan—
"Ah, then I shall be strong and wise,
When I'm a man!"

"When I was young," the old man sighs,
"Bravely the lark and linnet sung
Their carol under sunny skies,
When I was young!"

"When I'm a man, I shall be free
To guard the right, the truth uphold."
"When I was young I bent no knee
To power or gold."

"Then shall I satisfy my soul
With yonder prize, when I'm a man."
"Too late I found how vain the goal
To which I ran."

"When I'm a man these idle toys
Aside forever shall be flung."
"There was no poison in my joys
When I was young."

The boy's bright dream is all before,
The man's romance lies far behind;
Had we the present and no more,
Fate were unkind.

But, brother, toiling in the night,
Still count yourself not all unblest
If in the east there gleams a light,
Or in the west.

AN OLD MAN'S DREAM.

Oh, for one hour of youthful joy!
Give back my twentieth spring!
I'd rather laugh a bright-haired boy,
Than reign a gray-haired king.

Off with the wrinkled spoils of age;
Away with learning's crown;
Tear out life's wisdom-written page,
And cast its trophies down.

One moment let my life-blood stream
From boyhood's fount of flame;
Give me one giddy, reeling dream
Of life, and love, and fame.

My listening angel heard the prayer,
And calmly smiling, said,
"If I but touch thy silvered hair,
Thy hasty wish had sped.

"But is there nothing in the track
To bid thee fondly stay,
While the swift seasons hurry back,
To find the wished-for day?"

Ah, truest soul of womankind,
Without thee what were life?
One bliss I can not leave behind—
I'll take my precious wife.

The angel took a sapphire pen,
And wrote in rainbow hue,
"The man would be a boy again,
And be a husband too.

"And is there nothing yet unsaid,
Before the change appears?
Remember, all thy gifts have fled
With these dissolving years."

"Why, yes, I would one favor more:
My fond paternal joys—
I could not bear to lose them all;
I'll take my girls and boys."

The smiling angel dropped his pen,
"Why, this will never do;
The man would be a boy again,
And be a father too!"

And so I laughed. My laughter woke
The household with its noise.
I wrote my dream when morning broke,
To please my girls and boys.

NOT AS I WILL.

Not as I will; how can I say it, Lord?
The faces, dear as life itself could be,
Are out of sight beneath the heavy sward;
I call; the dumb lips never answer me.

Behind me lie the long and lonely years;
But through the days all overworn with care,

I still have kept the thought, too sad for tears,
Of the dear faces cold and deathly fair.

Only in dreams I see them as of old,
And even then my joy is touched with pain,
For as their fingers would my own enfold,
The blessed vision vanishes again,

And I but hear the winter wind without;
I know how cold and dark their dwellings lie,
How drearily the snow is tossed about
By homeless winds beneath the midnight sky.

The festal seasons of the year return;
And scattered households gladly reunite;
Upon the hearths the cheerful homefires burn,
And the gay circles gather in their light.

For me, I sit alone; the empty chair
At my still fire-side, waits no coming guest;
But haunting thoughts and memories are there,
And those sad inmates, heartache and unrest.

I know the heavenly city safely stands,
Fair beyond all things that we deem most fair,
Eternal in the heavens, not made with hands;
I know all beauty and all joy are there.

But earthly love is passionate and strong.
O God, forgive the hearts that Thou hast made;
Forgive us that our days seem sad and long,
And that we weep and grieve o'er hopes decayed.

Lead Thou Thy lonesome children; help us say,
Though sobs break all our speech, Thou still canst hear,
"Not as I will," for, oh, we long and pray
To yield our idols without doubt or fear;

To Thine own hands, that, pierced and torn for us,
Have taught our hearts how strong true love may be;
Help us to learn these lessons well, for thus
Our stricken hearts alone may rest in Thee.

AT MITHER'S KNEE.

AT mither's knee I waitin' stood,
Wi' fingers link'd behin' me,
The bauldest o' the bairnheid brood:—
That hour they seldom fined me;
My mither's weel-arch'd bree aboon,
Wi' lo'e-lit e'e, a' droopin'—
The deid, the gaun, they gather roun',
In memory's halie groupin'!

Her han' she placed upon my heid;
Hoo aften I've caressed it!
An' syne it mould'red wi' the deid,
Hoo aft wi' tears ha'e blessed it!
Hoo sweet she tauld us o' Christ's lo'e,
Hoo He lay in the manger:
Hoo, then, she leuked our hale life thro',
An' mapped out ilka danger.

A roguish, rompin' bairn was I,
Wi' een deep-set, blue-blinkin',
Wha speir'd o' things 'baith laigh and high,
An' had a way o' thinkin':
Her leuk o' lo'e could mak' the tear
Adoon my cheek fast trickle—
But, ah, nae bairn lang face lang wears,
He has o' joys sic mickle.

She never thought her wark was gran',
Nor bruited it, nor tauld it:
But, kept at it, wi' silent han',
Our bairnheid life to mould it;
She blent' it wi' the halie sphere,
Ower whilk she stretch'd lo'e's scepter;
The harvest o' life's comin' year,
Hopefu' through a' this kept her.

For, like the sources o' the burn,
Frae rocks an' trees doon-drappin',
These deft-hid things that first we learn,
Still oot they maun be crappin',
I've lang forgot the beuks I read,
The wise things taught i' college:
But time'll na dri'e frae oot my head
That ither bairnheid knowledge!

A SCATTERED FAMILY.

WE have been all together on the earth;
But now the band that bound our gentle sheaf
Is loosed—the powerful magic bond of birth;
Our hearts no longer turn one golden leaf
Each day; no more, though every winter night,
Brightening within though skies without may frown,
We all are gathered close about one light,
With loving wreaths the warm quick hours to crown;
For the one word of "Home," which we had worn,
From the soul's lips, to worldly language clear,
Returns an alien answer to its sound,
From other firesides, winter-lighted, borne.
"Home!"—'twas a word of heaven homeless here,
Whose wandering echo in our hearts we found!

IN THE ORCHARD.

COOL, restful shadows 'neath the old, gnarled trees,
A fresh-mown meadow, stretching to the right,
Beyond, dark druid firs on bended knees
Before their shrine of hills aflame with light,
When, dipping low, October's magic cup
From gloomy fens transmuted gold draws up!

A dreamy quiet reigns—no brooding bird
Startles the shade where dainty nests are hid;
Ended the summer's work, and naught is heard
Save drowsy drones repeating what "*she did,*
She didn't, she did,"—when days were long and bright,
And full of busy noise from morn till night.

Oh, rare, such autumn life! Oh, buds of June!
Beneath these weighted boughs of gold and red,
As one who sudden hears a long-lost tune,
With hushed and almost reverent step I tread,
Breathing once more the delicate perfume
Of fresh-plowed earth and flash of rosy-bloom!

Oh, promises fulfilled! Oh, hopes of youth!
With humble heart I place them side by side,
Thankful to Higher strength if aught, forsooth,
Of ripened, golden harvest doth abide;
And for the rest—ah, well! the dear Lord knew
Why some fair buds to fruitage never grew!

AN EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

How swiftly rise the rolling years!
How fast they come and go!
Through storm and sunshine, joy and tears,
They keep their mighty flow
Onward from childhood's merry play,
Through youth's romantic page,
Through "heat and burden of the day"
Down to declining age.

.

Hither from busy life we come,
Round the old hearth to meet,
We gather in this ancient home,
About our Mother's feet;
We bring the tribute of the heart,
The tribute of the hand,
To her who bore the Mother's part,
Amid our household band.

.

To-day the Past unseals its urn,
And pours its treasures back,
The golden memories return
Along their noiseless track;
It rises up—the olden time,
The years of long ago,
When life was in its early prime,
And gladness in its flow.

.

When parsons stayed till hair grew gray,
And died amid their flocks,
And little gains were laid away,
Without such ponderous locks;
When he who taught the winter school
Was one of great renown,
And all the greater, as a rule,
If from another town.

When spelling-school and husking-bee,
With trainings now and then,
Gave ample range for jollity
To boys and grown-up men;
When fife and drum along the street
Were good as modern bands,
And home-made music sounded sweet
As that from foreign lands.

When dresses, cut from calico,
Made lasses look as fair
As all the silks and velvets do
Which modern lasses wear;
When Love knew how to find the heart
And easily prevail,
And did not have to wing his dart
Through fashion's coat of mail.

.

When churches yet were minus stoves,
And preachers read their notes
Dressed up in good warm buckskin gloves
And solid overcoats;
When through the winter cold and storm
The hearers—high and low—
Would rap their feet to keep them warm,
And hail the time to go.

THE OLD HOME.

I HAVE gone—I can not always go, you know;
Best 'tis so—
Home across the distant ridges of the year,
With my ear:
And the old house, standing still on the old ground,
There I found.

In the parlor, in my fancy, I could trace
Father's face;
And my mother, with her old accustomed air,
Sitting there;
While beside them brothers, sisters, true and good,
Silent stood.

Through the stillness swam the song of summer bird,
And there stirred

On the wall the leaf-flecked sunshine; and its glow
Faded slow;
But, from all the loving lips I watched around—
Not a sound.

Then I went up-stairs, slow entering 'mid their glooms
All the rooms;
And I trod with softened step along the floors;
Opened doors;
But I never heard a voice or met a soul
In the whole.

Of the breaths that stirred the draperies to and fro
Long ago;
Of the eyes that through the casement used to peep
Out of sleep;
Of the feet that in these chambers used to run—
Now are none.

Of the sunshine pouring downward from the sky,
Blue and high;
Of the leafage and the ancient garden plot,
Brown and hot;
Of the streamlet and the shingle and the tide—
These abide.

But beyond the azure vaulting overhead
Are my dead;
Though their graves were dug apart in many lands,
Joining hands,
They have gathered and are waiting till I come.
That is home!

BOYS AND GIRLS.

When we are young our boys are sweet,
They climb our knees and lie at our feet;
When we are old they are hard to please,
Cold as the rock and wild as the breeze;
They kiss us kindly and speak us fair,
But we know their hearts are otherwhere.
Oh, my son's my son till he gets him a wife,
But my daughter's my daughter all my life.

When we are young our days are bright,
And full of hope from morn till night;
When we are old we sit alone,
And think of pleasant days long gone,
When the house was full of the children's noise,
The willful girls and naughty boys.
Oh, my son's my son till he gets him a wife,
But my daughter's my daughter all my life.

OUR SAINT.

There was a woman once so pure and fine
That men half wondered if she were divine,
And there were those would reverently confess
Dark sins to her of their unsaintliness.

She was not canonized, as some have been,
And yet you could not trace the taint of sin
In any of her cheery words and ways
Of any place or day of all her days.

And so we thought her saint, and called her such,
While here and there came one who longed to touch
Her garment's hem, if haply it might be
A holy charm to set a chained soul free.

Madonna? No; and yet it always seemed
That the still influences which from her streamed
Were like those ancient ones where knelt and trod
In Galilee the mother of our God.

Some saints are named upon the Church's books
Who paved their lives with penance, and whose looks
Were overshadowed with a gloom intense—
Error's sincere, but bitter eloquence.

Not such an one was she—our saint—ah, no;
From all her being shone the ardent glow
Of loves and hopes that fed on happiness,
Receiving which, she could the better bless.

She even chided with a helpful smile,
And chiding, longed to say "well done" the while,
Then beamed on goodness with so bright a grace
That all sweet things seemed nestling in her face.

The rankling hates and envies of mankind,
That steal their hope and truth and make them blind,
And keep them back from virtue's path and goal,
Were scared and scattered by her gentle soul.

She never fluttered like a bird at sight
Of any ill, for love o'ercame all fright,
And stirred the mother-feeling, which is wont
To stand protectingly in danger's front.

Her voice, more winning than the voice of lute,
Did speak its word in season, then was mute,
Pausing and waiting willingly to learn,
While other speech, or silence, had its turn.

Her changing eyes and changing lips were pleas
For thousands to all tender sympathies,
Revealing there a soul that could not rest
From wishing blessings on each life unblest.

Her willing feet and willing hands would haste
To give each new-found sufferer a taste
Of whatsoever thing might soothe or heal
The body or the soul, for either's weal.

Could you have heard her pray, as we have heard,
To the dear God, each softly-uttered word
Seeming to fly straight upward to His throne,
You would have wished to make her faith your own.

You would have felt the secret of her power,
And wondered not that almost every hour
New strength and courage unto her were sent,
Nor that she shared them whereso'er she went.

Could you have heard her sing, as we have heard,
Her notes more pure than those of any bird,
And praise and tenderness in every one,
You'd half have worshiped her, as we have done.

She was herself a very prayer and song,
E'en though her lips kept silence, all day long;

You saw her such in every move and look,
And read her such, as in an open book.

A perfect woman? No; but almost this,
And needed to foreshow the love and bliss
Of unseen future, so that we might strive
The more to keep our altar fires alive.

How much of good and warmth one glowing heart
Can to this bad and chilly world impart!
How clearly, too, its light o'ershines the way
Through these dark days unto the perfect day!

COMING HOME.

OH, brothers and sisters growing old,
Do you all remember yet,
That home, in the shade of the rustling trees,
Where once our household met?

Do you know how we used to come from school,
Through the summer's pleasant heat,
With the yellow fennel's golden dust
On our tired little feet.

And how sometimes, in an idle mood,
We loitered by the way,
And stopped in the woods to gather flowers,
And in the fields to play?

Till warned by the deepening shadow's fall,
That told of the coming night,
We climbed to the top of the last long hill,
And saw our home in sight?

And brothers and sisters, older now
Than she whose life is o'er,
Do you think of the mother's loving face,
That looked from the open door?

Alas, for the changing things of time!
That home in the dust is low,
And that loving smile was hid from us
In that darkness long ago.

And we come to life's last hill,
From which our weary eyes
Can almost look on that home that shines
Eternal in the skies.

So, brothers and sisters, as we go,
Still let us move as one,
Always together keeping step
Till the march of life is done.

For that mother, who waited for us here,
Wearing a smile so sweet,
Now waits on the hills of Paradise
For her children's coming feet.

THE LOST BABIES.

COME, my wife, put down the Bible,
Lay your glasses on the book,
Both of us are bent and aged—
Backward, mother, let us look.
This is still the same old homestead,
Where I brought you long ago,
When the hair was bright with sunshine,
That is now like winter's snow.
Let us talk about the babies
As we sit here all alone,
Such a merry troop of youngsters;
How we lost them one by one.

Jack, the first of all the party,
Came to us one winter's night.
Jack, you said, should be a parson,
Long before he saw the light.
Do you see that great cathedral,
Filled, the transept and the nave,

Hear the organ grandly pealing,
Watch the silken hangings wave;
See the priest in robes of office,
With the altar at his back—
Would you think that gifted preacher
Could be our own little Jack?

Then a girl with curly tresses
Used to climb upon my knee,
Like a little fairy princess
Ruling at the age of three.
With the years there came a wedding—
How your fond heart swelled with pride
When the lord of all the country
Chose your baby for his bride!
Watch that stately carriage coming,
And the form reclining there—
Would you think that brilliant lady
Could be your own little Clare?

Then the last, a blue-eyed youngster—
I can hear him prattling now—
Such a strong and sturdy fellow,
With his broad and honest brow.
How he used to love his mother!
Ah! I see your trembling lip!
He is far off on the water,
Captain of a royal ship.
See the bronze upon his forehead,
Hear the voice of stern command—
That the boy who clung so fondly
To his mother's gentle hand?

Ah! my wife, we've lost the babies,
Ours so long and ours alone:
What are we to these great people,
Stately men and women grown?
Seldom do we even see them;
Yes, a bitter tear-drop starts,
As we sit here in the fire-light,
Lonely hearth and lonely hearts.
All their lives are full without us;
They'll stop long enough one day
Just to lay us in the church-yard,
Then they'll each go on their way.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

AH! here it is, that dear old place
Unchanged through all these years;
How like some sweet, familiar face
My childhood's home appears;
The grand old trees beside the door
Still spread their branches wide;
The river wanders as of yore,
With sweetly murmuring tide;
The distant hills look green and gay,
The flowers blooming wild,
And everything looks glad to-day,
As when I was a child.

Regardless how the years have flown,
Half wondering I stand,
I catch no fond, endearing tone,
I clasp no friendly hand;
I think my mother's smile to meet,
I list my father's call,
I pause to hear my brother's feet
Come bounding through the hall;
But silence all around me reigns,
A chill creeps through my heart—
No trace of those I love remains,
And tears unbidden start.

What though the sunbeams fall as fair;
What though the budding flowers
Still shed their fragrance on the air,
Within life's golden hours;
The loving ones that cluster here
These walls may not restore;
Voices that filled my youthful ear
Will greet my soul no more;
And yet I quit the dear old place
With slow and lingering tread,
As when we kiss a clay-cold face
And leave it with the dead.

NOTHING.

THERE is nothing to see!
It is only a silver birch;
But it comes like a beautiful joy to me,
Like the joy you feel so calm and free,
When all is still as still can be,
After a psalm in the church.

It is so fair and light!
It grows on a rock by a well!

The rock is so strong and the birch is so slight,
That they fill my heart with a strange delight,
And I think they make a wonderful sight,
Though why I can never tell!

The rock I grasp and reach,
And the birch-tree I can not touch;
But its rustling leaves have a tender speech,
For I feel a particular love for each,
And I know that their whispered words can teach
And comfort me very much.

The rock is strong and wild,
And the well is wide and deep;
So I nodded my little head and smiled,
For I felt they could both protect a child;
And the birch-tree murmured soft and mild,
And so I fell fast asleep.

Why should this written be?
And what have I got to tell?
The wise, wise people will laugh at me,
And say there is nothing at all to see,
Only a rock, and only a tree,
And only a little well!

MEMORIES OF THE OLD KITCHEN.

FAR back in my musings, my thoughts have been cast
To the cot where the hours of my childhood were passed.
I loved all its rooms, to the pantry and hall,
But that blessed old kitchen was dearer than all.
Its chairs and its table, none brighter could be,
For all its surroundings were sacred to me,
To the nail in the ceiling, the latch on the door;
And I loved every crack of that old kitchen floor.

I remember the fire-place with mouth high and wide,
The old-fashioned oven that stood by its side,
Out of which, each Thanksgiving, came puddings and pies,
That fairly bewildered and dazzled our eyes;
And then, too, Saint Nicholas, slyly and still,
Came down, every Christmas, our stockings to fill;
But the dearest of memories I've laid up in store,
Is the mother that trod that old kitchen-floor.

Day in and day out, from morning till night,
Her footsteps were busy, her heart always light;
For it seemed to me then that she knew not a care,
The smile was so gentle her face used to wear.
I remember with pleasure what joy filled our eyes
When she told us the stories that children so prize;
They were new every night, though we'd heard them before
From her lips, at the wheel, on the old kitchen-floor.

I remember the window where mornings I'd run,
As soon as the daybreak, to watch for the sun;
And I thought, when my head scarcely reached to the sill,
That it slept through the night, in the trees on the hill,
And the small tract of ground that my eyes there could view
Was all of the world that my fancy knew;

Indeed, I cared not to know of it more,
For a world in itself was that old kitchen-floor.

To-night those old visions come back at their will,
But the wheel and its music forever are still;
The band is moth-eaten, the wheel laid away,
And the fingers that turned it lie mould'ring in clay:
The hearthstone, so sacred, is just as 'twas then,
And the voices of children ring out there again;
The sun through the window looks in as of yore,
But it sees stranger feet on the old kitchen-floor.

I ask not for honor, but this I would crave—
That when the lips speaking are closed in the grave,
My children will gather theirs round at their side,
And tell of the mother that long ago died:
'Twould be more enduring, far dearer to me
Than inscription on marble or granite could be,
To have them tell often, as I did of yore,
Of the mother that trod the old kitchen-floor.

A LIFE'S REGRET.

TURNING the leaves in an idle way
Of a book I was skimming the other day.
I found a line at the end of a song,
Which keeps on haunting me all day long
With its sweet and mournful melody,
"Oh, love, my love, had you loved but me!"
Sadder a burden could never be
Than "love, my love, had you loved but me!"

Few words and simple: but, oh, how much
The singer has told in that little touch!
How hard a story of chances lost,
Of bright hopes blighted and true love crossed,
Is heard in the whispered melody,
"Oh, love, my love, had you loved but me!"
To many a sorrow the key may be
That "love, my love, had you loved me!"

I don't believe in what poets have said
Of hearts that are broken and lives that are dead;
Lives well ordered will stand to their course,
And hearts of true metal ring little the worse,
But—they vibrate still that melody,
"Oh, love, my love, had you loved but me!"
My life is well; but what would it be,
Sweet "love, my love, had you loved but me!"

The world rolls on and the years roll by,
Day-dreams vanish and memories die;
But it surges up with a restless pain,
That fond lost longing ever again
Breathed in the passionate melody,
"Oh, love, my love, had you loved but me!"
It might have been, but it can not be!
Yet "love, my love, had you loved but me!"

LOOKING BACK.

THIS is the old farm-house,
With its deep, rose-tangled porch,
Where hover and rise white butterflies,
And honey bees hold debauch.
Oh, many a time and oft
I have followed the lark aloft!
And my heart, my heart flies back
On the dead years' shadowy track.
And now in the lane, on a loaded wain,
I'm a happy and hot little boy again!

Just such a windless noon
As this in a buried June,
When the scented hay in the meadows lay,
And the thrushes were all in tune.
On the staggering load exultant rode,
And the red-faced wagoner, "wey'd and whoa'd."
Long ago in a buried June!

Days when to breathe was bliss,
Perfect, and pure, and strong,
No pulse of the heart amiss,
No beat of the brain-work wrong,
When care was a word and love an absurd
Fabrication of story and song.

Is it so long ago,
This life of color and light?
Will it not show some after-glow
Ere the day dips into the night?
Oh, youth, have ye left me quite?
Oh, years, have ye dimmed my sight?
Lo, the light is shade and the colors fade,
And the day dips into the night.

OH, FOR A SWING IN THE OLD ELM TREE.

Oh, for a swing in the old elm tree
And a breath from the clover fields!
I'd give the state of a palace hall
And the spices that India yields

To see again in the old-time way
The meadows and pastures I knew,
The hills and the valleys, the rocks and the trees,
And the woods where the wild-flowers grew;

To lie once more in the thick, soft grass
With the sweet winds brushing by,
The world outside and a heart at peace,
And above the summer sky:

To watch the clouds in their shifting lights
And the mists on the distant hills,
And dream to the music of rustling leaves
And the voices of dancing rills;

To wade once more in the cooling stream
That wound by the roadside below,
Where the laurel bloomed, and the eglantine
And the maiden-hair used to grow;

To kneel again in the little church
Where I prayed with a childish trust
Ere the haunting doubts of a later time
Had touched it with moth and rust;

To sleep once more 'neath the moss-grown roof:
My spirit would find again
The long-lost chord of that happy time
And take up the glad refrain.

My heart grows sick and my eyes are dim
For a sight of familiar things;
The grassy nook and the old elm tree
Would be more than the throne of kings.

Ah, me, how the years have stretched between!
What chances and changes they've wrought!
What gains and what losses, what hopes and what fears,
How little of promise they've brought!

THE DAYS THAT ARE NO MORE.

Oh, memories of green and pleasant places,
Where happy birds their wood-notes twittered low!
Oh, love that lit the dear, familiar faces
We buried long ago!

From barren heights their sweetness we remember,
And backward gaze with wistful, yearning eyes.
As hearts regret, 'mid snowdrifts of December,
The summer's sunny skies.

Glad hours that seemed their rainbow tints to borrow
From some illumined page of fairy lore;
Bright days that never lacked a bright to-morrow,
Days that return no more.

Fair gardens, with their many-blossomed alleys,
And red, ripe roses breathing out perfume;
Deep violet nooks in green, sequestered valleys,
Empurpled o'er with bloom.

Sunset that lighted up the brown-leaved beeches,
Turning their dusky glooms to glimmering gold;
Moonlight that on the river's fern-fringed beaches
Streamed white-rayed, silvery cold.

O'er moorlands bleak we wander weary-hearted,
Throug mhany a tangled, wild, and thorny maze,
Remembering as in dreams the days departed,
The by-gone, happy days.

TELL ME WHERE THE VIOLETS GROW.

I WONDER where the violets grow,
The lily-bells as white as snow;
A single tiny stem I've found
Close nestled in the leaves around;
One tiny stem, a single one,
And yet how high the morning sun!
I thought they always, always grew
Where free birds sung and skies were blue—
These tiny bells too frail to touch;
It would not matter half so much
How high the sun or few the flowers;
But Jeannie waits and counts the hours,
And listens in her earnest way
To hear me coming, and to-day
I promised something nice to bring—
Some little, dainty, sweetened thing—
And promised not to stay. Alas!
To hunt for violets in the grass—
For violets sweet, and bells of snow—
With many, many miles to go,
And then to see them in the street—
Those tiny little bells so sweet—
Is not so easy quite, I think,
As gathering flowers upon the brink
Of brooks, as once so long ago
We used to do. Oh, Belles-of-snow!
I'm sure if you could only see
The pale face waiting there for me.
You would peep out and let me find
Your bells to gather up and bind;
It is a face so pale and sad—
Not even bread to make it glad—
The lips that whispered in a prayer
Were cold to-day; oh, tell me where
The little clumps of violets grow,
Those lily-bells as white as snow!

A SUMMER DAY.

DEEP down beside the tangled sedge
The meadow-lark sings all the day,
And bursts at times from out the hedge
The mimic chatter of the jay;
And here and there a wandering note,
A cricket's chirp, comes sweet and clear,
Where dreamy mists of summer float
At noon upon the grassy mere.

Afar away below the hill
I see the noisy mill-wheel go,
The smooth, broad lake above the mill,
The flash of foam that roars below!

And on the even slopes that rise
So gently toward the mountain's brow,
The cattle watch with sleepy eyes
The lazy plowboy at the plow.

My soul is sleeping, and its dreams
Ah, sad and sweet that dreaming thrills,
For there are other vales and streams,
And other flocks on other hills—
The hills whereon I climbed to pull
The golden-rods and weeds of May,
When all the world was beautiful
And all my life a summer day.

THE FIR-TREE.

HEAR'ST thou the song it sings to me?
The endless song of the dark fir-tree.
Before my window, beside my door,
It sighs and whispers forevermore,
By dawn, or daylight, or night's mid-hour,
I hear its still small voice of power,
"Eternity! Eternity!"
Is the hourly message it brings to me.

When I am weary and worn with pain,
And the burning sunshine fires my brain,
Faint, and listless, and fit for death,
It swings and rustles with fragrant breath:
"Hot and lonely thy noon may be,
But there is a long, long rest for thee:
Eternity! Eternity!"
This is the psalm of the old fir-tree.

Sometimes the storms of summer pour,
The lightnings dazzle, the thunders roar;
Those dark boughs groan, and writhe, and sway,
But, sighing and moaning, still they say:
"An end of the tempests of earth shall be;
A tranquil morning awaiteth thee—
Eternity! Eternity!
Beyond this fateful and angry sea."

When winter hath scattered leaf and rose,
And the boughs bend low with heavy snows,
Their patient drooping a lesson lends,
To a life borne down with the care He sends.
"Bend to thy burden! awhile, for thee
The weight and wear of toil must be.
Eternity! Eternity!
From care and carking shall set thee free."

If the ways of man my spirit vex,
And the ways of God my soul perplex,
When He hath taken my life's desire,
And molten my heart in His 'fining fire;
When the dearest eyes I can not see,
And the voice I longed for is dead to me:
"Wait! for thy longing shall find the key;
Eternity! Eternity!
There shall the dayspring come back to thee,"
Softly singeth the dark fir-tree.

When I shall sleep in my quiet grave,
Oh, kindly fir-tree, above me wave!
Utter thine anthems to one who grieves
Under thy shining, singing leaves:
"Keep thy faith like the fadeless tree!
Tender and true let memory be,
Eternity! Eternity!
There thy lost love is waiting for thee!"
Blest be thy music, oh, dark fir-tree!
And blessed the Maker who fashioned thee!

"NOT DEAD, BUT RISEN."

HE who died at Azim sends
This to comfort all his friends:

Faithful friends! It lies, I know,
Pale and white, and cold as snow;
And ye say, "Abdallah's dead!"
Weeping at the feet and head.
I can see your falling tears;
I can hear your sighs and prayers;

Yet I smile and whisper this:
I am not the thing you kiss;
Cease your tears, and let it lie—
It *was* mine—it is not I.

Sweet friends! What the women lave
For the last sleep of the grave,
Is a hut which I am quitting;
Is a garment no more fitting;
Is a cage from which at last,
Like a bird, my soul has passed.
Love the inmate, not the room—
The wearer, not the garb—the plume
Of the eagle, not the bars
That kept him from those splendid stars!

Loving friends! Be wise, and dry
Straightway every weeping eye.
What ye lift upon the bier
Is not worth a single tear.
'Tis an empty sea-shell—one
Out of which the pearl has gone;
The shell is broken—it lies there:
The pearl, the all, the soul is here.
'Tis an earthen jar, whose lid
Allah sealed the while it hid
That treasure of his treasury—
A mind that loved. Let it lie;
Let the shard be earth's once more,
Since the gold is in his store!

Allah glorious! Allah good!
Now thy world is understood;
Now the long, long wonder ends!
Yet ye weep, my erring friends,
While the man whom ye call dead,
In unspoken bliss instead,
Lives and loves you; lost, 'tis true
For the light that shines for you;
But in the light ye can not see,
Of undisturbed felicity—
In a pefect paradise,
And a life that never dies.

Farewell, friends! But not farewell;
Where I am, ye too shall dwell.
I am gone before your face
A moment's worth, a little space.
When ye come where I have stept,
Ye will wonder why ye wept;
Ye will know, by true love taught,
That here is all, and there is naught.
Weep awhile, if ye are fain—
Sunshine still must follow rain;
Only not a death—for death,
Now we know, is that first breath
Which our souls draw when we enter
Life, which is of all life center.

Be ye certain, all seems love
Viewed from Allah's throne above!
Be ye stout of heart and come
Bravely onward to your home!
La-il Allah! Allah la!
Oh, love divine! Oh, love alway!

He who died at Azim gave
This to those who made his grave.

SOUNDS.

THERE are countless sounds in this world of ours,
Where hidden music dwells;
The song of birds when the day is young,
The chime of distant bells;
The echo of children's voices, borne
From the shady primrose dells.

The tiny tread of a childish foot,
That strays about the room;
The tiny voice of a childish song,
That comes to you through the gloom
When the evening shadows are long without,
And the light grows dim at home.

The murmuring rustle of the leaves
That breathes a quiet tune;
The gentle dripping upon the grass
Of a midnight shower in June;
The far-off voice of a hidden brook,
That sings low to the moon.

The voice you have waited for so long,
The greeting kind and free;
The word that calls back to your heart
Some old, old memory,

That sealed the promise your soul has held
Silent and sacredly.

There are many sounds in these hearts of ours,
That speak to us alone;
Voices that reach not other ears,
Unheard save by our own;
Footsteps that echo back again
From the past with a muffled tone.

Oh, is there naught in those sounds to you?
No tender meaning there?
Can you not hear their echoes now,
As the cry of some despair?
Or is your life so crowned with bliss
You can forget they were?

BUBBLES.

I.

I STOOD on the brink in childhood,
And watched the bubbles go
From the rock-fretted, sunny ripple
To the smoother tide below.

And over the wide creek-bottom,
Under them every one,
Went golden stars in the water,
All luminous with the sun.

But the bubbles broke on the surface,
And under, like stars of gold
Broke; and the hurrying water
Flowed onward, swift and cold,

II.

I stood on the brink in manhood,
And it came to my weary brain,
And my heart, so dull and heavy
After the years of pain—

That every hollowest bubble
Which over my life had passed
Still into its deeper current
Some heavenly gleam had cast;
That, however I mocked it gayly,
And guessed at its hollowness,
Still shone, with each bursting bubble,
One star in my soul the less.

A WIDOW'S THOUGHT.

SING on, ye happy warblers, nor refrain,
Ye can not bring him pleasure now, nor pain;
Thou merry brooklet, dancing in the sun,
Haste on thy way, till play and work be done.

Thou careless herdsboy, whistling o'er the lea,
I would not that my sorrow saddened thee;
And ye, ye tender flow'rets that he loved,
I'd have ye bloom where'er his feet have roved.

I would not that the children in the street
E'en for a moment stilled their busy feet;
I would not close the casement from the light,
I would not drive loved faces from my sight.

I would not other eyes should fade and fill,
I would not other hearts should doubt His will;
Oh, heav'nly Father, even in my grief
I'll ask submission, and 'twill bring belief.

My load no earthly friend I'll ask to share,
For Thou hast taught us where to cast our care,
My shadow shall not cloud another's way—
The light on others' paths I'd gladly stay.

And it may be, in soothing others' pain,
That peace and hope shall come to me again,
And I may prove why God in love denies,
And chooses thus to bless the faith He tries.

PARSON KELLY.

Old Parson Kelly's fair young wife, Irene,
Died when but three months wed,
And no new love has ever come between
His true heart and the dead,
Though now for sixty years the grass has grown
Upon her grave, and on its simple stone
The moss
And yellow lichens creep her name across.

Outside the door, in the warm summer air,
The old man sits for hours.
The idle wind, that stirs his silver hair,
Is sweet with June's first flowers;
But dull his mind, and clouded with the haze
Of life's last weary, gray November days;
And dim
The past and present look alike to him.

The sunny scene around, confused and blurred,
The twitter of the birds,
Blend in his mind with voices long since heard—
Glad childhood's careless words,
Old hymns and Scripture texts; while indistinct
Yet strong, one thought with all fair things is linked—
The bride
Of his lost youth is ever by his side.

By its sweet weight of snowy blossoms bowed,
The rose-tree branch hangs low,
And in the sunshine, like a fleecy cloud,
Sways slowly to and fro.
"Oh, is it you?" the old man asks; "Irene!"
And smiles, and fancies that her face he's seen
Beneath
The opening roses of a bridal wreath!

Down from the gambrel roof a white dove flits,
The sunshine on its wings,
And lighting close to where the dreamer sits,
A vision with it brings—
A golden gleam from some long vanished day,
"Dear love," he calls; then, "Why will you not stay?"
He sighs,
For, at his voice, the bird looks up and flies!

Oh, constant heart! whose failing thoughts cling fast
To one long laid in dust,
Still seeing, turned to thine, as in the past,
Her look of perfect trust,
Her soft voice hearing in the south wind's breath,
Dream on! Love pure as thine shall outlive death,
And when
The gates unfold, her eyes meet thine again!

THE BROKEN HEARTHSTONE.

Our foot struck hard against a broken stone—
A hearthstone 'mid the corn:
It was the hearthstone that our childish feet
In the years past had worn.

We bowed, not heavy with a load of grief,
But tender tears came, making our belief

More fresh within us; not as to a grave
We came to seek the place,
But o'er the stones we bent most tenderly
Our sober homeward face;
We came as one who duly understands
The house he seeketh—one not made with hands.

But we would lean our homeward face once more
Upon earth's altar stones,
And if we cling too closely to the place,
New tenderness atones
For anything of doubt or human dread,
And in the place our soul was comforted.

A soft hand, fragrant as an angel's wing,
Reached from the stones and laid
Its touch upon us, there we found a string
Of pearls hung in the shade
Of the green waving corn; we knew the clear,
White valley lilies, to our childhood dear.

They came up through the chinks of the mossed stone;
They had crept from the still
To the old hearth. Perhaps most tenderly
Their fibers felt the chill
Of loneliness and crept more near, and near,
As we do to the hearthstone every year.

However, there they were, the valley bells
A-tremble on their strings—
The frail, yet the enduring, the unchanged.
As if an angel's wing
Had swept our heart, it trembled, and we said,
Yea, Lord, our pilgrim soul is comforted!

The corn above us waved triumphantly;
Vale-lilies bent beneath,
And all things said—not less our heart within—
"There is, there is no death!"
We will not put our human yearnings by,
They knit our soul to that which can not die;

But when we go on love's lone pilgrimage,
And when our tears like rain
Fall down on broken hearths, let us arise
In hope renewed again:
"We seek a better country," even where
The many mansions of the Father are.

And for the tenderness and for the tears
That welled as if from springs,
We thank Thee, God, and for the trembling notes
That hope within us sings!
She catches up the rustle of the corn,
The faintest whisper in the lily born,

And runs them on the white threads of the heart,
And they are sadly sweet—
Not chance nor change, nor any frost of time
Our soul's life can defeat.
Our home is an abiding city; there, with God,
Are those who, with us, earth's poor hearthstones trod.

IN AUTUMNS LONG AGO.

THE hills were veiled in purple mist,
The trees set as a zone of gold,
And far away as eye could reach
The still green prairie onward rolled.
The sky was blue as blue could be,
The cotton fields were white as now:
Oh, what a trance of joy had we
In autumns long ago!

Two happy children on a hill,
And seeing in the sunset clouds
Haroun's enchanted city loom
'Mid seas all white with fairy shrouds,
We gaze till all the golden depths
Held Bagdad's splendid pomp and glow:
The scents of Samarcand embalm
The autumns long ago.

We were so earnest as we planned
Such lives as never could have been—
Lives like some gorgeous phantasy
With words of love dropped in between.
I've had as foolish plans since then,
Yet wanting all the warmth and glow
That made life an enchanted dream
In autumns long ago.

Oh, could I see with those same eyes,
Or wave again the magic wand
That set among the sunset skies
The palaces of fairy-land,
We'd walk once more in scented grass,
And feel the cool Gulf breezes blow,
Love! half life's glory died with thee,
One autumn long ago.

Oh, young brave heart that trod alone
The wondrous road so dim and cold;
How did thy small feet find their way
To that fair land with streets of gold?
For, far beyond the sunset clouds,
And far beyond all lands I know,
Thy sweet soul passed, and left me here,
One autumn long ago.

Some day I shall feel tired of life,
And, full of rest from head to feet,
Shall fall on sleep and wait for thee
To lead me up the golden street.
Oh, then, beloved, our hopes and dreams
Shall all to sweet completion grow,
And we shall link eternal joys
With autumns long ago.

A FAREWELL.

FAREWELL, days, and months, and years;
Farewell, thoughts, and hopes, and fears;
Farewell, old delight, and woe;
Farewell, self of long ago!
In the old familiar place
Time sped on at slower pace—
Past recall, indeed, you lie,
Days, and months, and years gone by,
Now the old familiar door
Shuts us out forevermore!

Farewell, house—no more our home!
Others, in the years to come,
Hither homeward will return—
On the hearth their fires will burn;
Children that we do not know
Gather round the blithesome glow;
Other feet will tread the stair,
Other guests be welcomed there.
We, whose home it was before,
Shall be strangers evermore!

May be, in the years to come,
Past the house our feet may roam—
Over all a subtle change
Will have stolen and made it strange,
And the house we leave to-day
Will have vanished quite away.
In this house's joy and care
We shall have no lot nor share;
All our life herein will seem
Like a half-forgotten dream.
We shall be as ghosts, that come
Ling'ring round their ancient home,
If our feet pass evermore
Near the old familiar door.

Farewell, days, and months, and years;
Farewell, buried hopes and fears!
Wheresoe'er our footsteps stray,
Whether long or brief our stay,
Whatsoever good we find,
Many graves we leave behind.
So, farewell, old joy and pain,
We shall never know again!
Farewell, all things that we leave!
Surely, life and warmth must cleave
To the house, when we are gone.
Can it empty seem, and lone,
When the echoes of the years,
Hopes and joys, and griefs and fears,
Scarce have died from roof and wall?
Surely, ghostly steps will fall
On the bare dismantled floors,
Gliding in at open doors,
Flitting up and down the stair,
Will not shadows wander there—
Shades more vague than shadows are,
Or than ghosts that break death's bar?
Sure our wraiths, when we are gone,
Oft will haunt the chambers lone—
Come to seek (ah, ne'er to find!)
All the years we leave behind?
Farewell, house, forevermore!
Farewell, old familiar door!
Farewell, home—yet no, not so—
Home goes with us where we go!

IN EXILE.

THE sea at the crag's base brightens,
And shivers in waves of gold;
And overhead, in its vastness,
The fathomless blue is rolled.
There comes no wind from the water,
There shines no sail on the main,
And not a cloudlet to shadow
The earth with its fleecy grain,
Oh! give in return for this glory,
So passionate, warm, and still,
The mist of a Highland valley—
The breeze from a Scottish hill.

Day after day glides slowly,
Ever and ever the same;
Seas of intensest splendor,
Airs which smite hot as flame.
Birds of imperial plumage,
Palms straight as columns of fire,
Flutter and glitter around me;
But not so my soul's desire.
I long for the song of the laverock,
The cataract's leap and flash,
The sweep of the red deer's antlers,
The gleam of the mountain ash.

Only when night's quiescent,
And peopled with alien stars,
Old faces come to the casement,
And peer through the vine-leaved bars.
No words! But I guess their fancies—
Their dreamings are also mine—
Of the land of the cloud and heather—
The region of Auld Lang Syne.
Again we are treading the mountains,
Below us broadens the firth,
And billows of light keep rolling
Down leagues of empurpled heath.

Speed swift through the glowing tropics,
Stout ship, which shall bear me home;
Oh, pass, as a God-sent arrow,
Through tempest, darkness, and foam,
Bear up through the silent girdle
That circles the flying earth,
Till there shall blaze on thy compass
The lode-star over the north,
That the winds of the hills may greet us,
That our footsteps again may be
In the land of our heart's traditions,
And close to the storied sea.

APPLE-BLOSSOMS.

THE orchard grass is sunshine barred,
And starry-white upon the sward
The pretty daisies lie;
I rest beneath a mossy tree,
And through its waving branches see
The sapphire of the sky.

I feel the balmy breeze of May
Soft blowing down the grassy way,
And in the boughs above
The little birds break into song,
And praise in thrilling strains and strong,
Spring's halcyon days of love.

The apple-blossoms fall around,
And fleck the daisy-checkered ground
As breezes softly blow;
I stretch a lazy hand aloft,
And grasp a cluster, silken-soft,
Like rosy-tinted snow.

I look at every tender leaf,
And marvel while a life so brief
To such sweet things is given;
Why not for them a longer space
To blossom gayly in their place,
Beneath the summer heaven?

Why not for them a longer time
To feel the sun at morning prime,
To see the moon at night?
To quiver by soft breezes stirred:
To listen when God's morning-bird
Sings heavenward his delight.

Ah, me, my heart! it must be so,
The blossom drops that fruit may grow,
The sweetness of the flower
Dies early on the vernal breeze,
That Autumn time may bless the trees
With gold and crimson dower.

Ah, me, my heart! so must thou see
The flowery hopes that gladden thee
In this thy morning prime,
Fade in the fair place where they grow,
Drop round thee swiftly, like the snow
Of apple-blossom time.

But if they leave thee, good and true,
And pure as when they blossomed new,
Then gladly let them go;
Where now these fairy blossoms be,
In God's good time thine eyes shall see
Thy life's fair harvest glow!

WILLOW WHISTLES.

'TWAS long ago—'tis but a dream—
Enwoven, like a silver thread
In emerald velvet, wound the stream
Down through the daisy-flowered mead,
Where flaming dandelions grew,
And shone like gold amid the green,
And violets from dells of dew
Looked shyly out upon the scene.

A barefoot boy and sun-browned lass
Sat making whistles by the brook;
The willows, at the nodding grass,
Their sunlit tresses gayly shook,
And through the rushes' amorous ranks
The wooing winds of summer sighed,
And white-robed hawthorns on the banks
Embraced above the silvery tide.

And thus flew by the light-winged hours;
Then on the stream in childish play,
They cast their broken twigs and flowers,
And watched them slowly drift away,
And hoped that Time, in coming years,
Might gently bear their lives along,
Where love's sweet light on Sorrow's tears
Arch rainbows over vales of song.

But, gliding like that singing stream,
The passing years sweep ever on;
And hopes which filled that loving dream
Are, like the drifting flowers, gone.
He flung his boyhood's toy away
To listen to the trump of fame,
And she forgot the merry lay
That from the willow whistle came.

The willow died; the nodding grass
And rushes are no longer there;
The fickle winds have sought, alas!
And wooed a thousand scenes as fair.
And he recalling, like a dream,
That summer day, has often sighed

That one as lovely as the stream,
Should prove as changeful as its tide.

The hawthorn stands where then it stood—
No flower or leaf its head adorns—
She wears her crown of womanhood,
And finds it but a crown of thorns;
And he, 'mid sorrow's blasting flame,
Has seen his cloud-built castles fall,
And finds, alas! the trump of fame
A willow whistle after all.

THANKSGIVING.

Oh, the glorious Thanksgivings
Of the days that are no more,
How, with each recurring season,
Wakes their mem'ry o'er and o'er:
When the hearts of men were simpler,
And the needs of life were less,
And its mercies were not reckoned
By the measure of excess.

What a happy turning homeward,
On the eve of that glad day;
What a throng of recollections
Round each object on the way.
Here the school-house with its maple,
Leafless now, and dark, and grim,
Shaking with each gust that crossed it
Threat'ning rods on every limb.

There the hill whose towering summit
Boyish feet had loved to climb,
When the distant peaks stood beck'ning,
In the glow of eventime;
And where boyish hearts had wondered,
Till the coming of the stars,
Of the great wide world that waited
Far beyond those sunset bars.

Ah, how gladly manhood's footsteps
Took again the homeward way,
Fain to leave the world behind them,
Were it only for a day;
Fain to seek the dear old hearthstone,
Warm with loving hearts and true,
While in simple, guileless pleasures
Youth and joy returned anew.

Then how sweet and safe the sleeping
'Neath the sheltering roof once more,
With the sentry poplars keeping
Guard above it as of yore.
Homely though the old square chamber,
And its couch but quaint and rude,
Still the dreams that sought its pillow
Were a bright beatitude.

Heaven send the glad Thanksgiving
Of that older, simpler time,
Tarry with us not in fancy,
Not in retrospective rhyme;
But in true and living earnest,
May the spirit of that day,
Artless, plain, and unpretending,
Once again resume its sway.

THE COUNTRY LIFE.

Not what we would, but what we must,
Makes up the sum of living;
Heaven is both more or less than just
In taking and in giving.
Swords cleave to hands that sought the plow,
And laurels miss the soldier's brow.

Me, whom the city holds, whose feet
Have worn its stony highways,
Familiar with its loneliest street—
Its ways were never my ways.
My cradle was beside the sea,
And there, I hope, my grave will be.

Old homestead! in that gray old town,
Thy vane is seaward blowing;
Thy slip of garden stretches down
To where the tide is flowing;
Below they lie; their sails are furled,
The ships that go about the world.

Dearer that little country house,
Inland, with pines beside it;
Some peach-trees, with unfruitful boughs,
A well, with weeds to hide it;
No flowers, or only such as rise
Self-sown, poor things, which all despise.

Dear country home, can I forget
The least of thy sweet trifles?
The window-vines that clamber yet,
Whose blooms the bee still rifles?
The roadside blackberries, growing ripe,
And in the woods the Indian pipe?

Happy the man who tills the field,
Content with rustic labor;
Earth does to him her fullness yield,
Hap what may be to his neighbor,
Well days, sound nights—oh! can there be
A life more rational and free?

Dear country life of child and man!
For both the best, the strongest,
That with the earliest race began,
And hast outlived the longest;
Their cities perished long ago;
Who the first farmers were we know.

Perhaps our Babels, too, will fall;
If so, no lamentations,
For Mother Earth will shelter all,
And feed the unborn nations!
Yes, and the swords that menace now
Will then be beaten to the plow.

THE BONNIE WEE WELL.

THE bonnie wee well on the breist o' the brae,
That shinkles sae cauld in the sweet smiles o' day,
An' croons a laigh sang a' to pleasure itsel',
As it jinks 'neath the breckan and genty blue-bell.

The bonnie wee well on the breist o' the brae
Seems an image tae me o' a bairnie at play;
For it springs frae the yird wi' a flicker o' glee,
And kisses the flowers, while its ripple they pree.

The bonnie wee well on the breist o' the brae
Wins blessings on blessings fu' monie ilk day;
For the wayworn and wearie aft rest by its side,
And man, wife, and wean a' are richly supplied.

The bonnie wee well on the breist o' the brae,
When the hare steals to drink in the gloamin' sae gray,
Where the wild moorlan' birds dip their nebs and take wing,
And the lark wets his whistle, ere mounting to sing.

Thou bonnie wee well on the breist o' the brae,
My memory oft haunts thee by nicht and by day,
For the friends I ha'e loved in the years that are gane,
Ha'e knelt by the brim, and thy gush ha'e parta'en'.

Thou bonnie wee well on the breist o' the brae,
While I stoop to thy bosom, my thirst to allay,
I will drink to the loved ones who come back nae mair,
And my tears will but hallow thy bosom sae fair.

Thou bonnie wee well on the briest o' the brae,
My blessing rests with thee, wherever I stray;
In joy and in sorrow, in sunshine and gloom,
I will dream of thy beauty, thy freshness and bloom.

In the depths of the city, midst turmoil and noise,
I'll oft hear with rapture thy love-teaching voice,
While fancy takes wing to thy rich fringe of green,
And quaffs thy cool waters in noon's gowden sheen.

CLOSING DAYS.

THE splashing breakers on the beach
Seem to the listening ear
To wail a soft, sweet plaintive dirge
For the departing year.
The yellow leaves, whirl'd o'er the path
By the sharp autumn breeze,
In eddying clouds are falling fast
From all the rustling trees.

The frost-beads sprinkle on the grass,
Bright in the chilly dawn;
The mateless thrush his lonely meal
Seeks on the rectory lawn.
The laurustinus 'gins to show
Her white and roseate flowers—
Sure token that have fled at last
The summer's golden hours.

Blackberries on the privet hang,
The ash shows clusters red,
Crowned with a scarlet diadem
King Oak's majestic head;
The elms are orange, the queen beech
Is robed in russet brown,
And from the graceful pendant birch
Dun leaves come showering down.

Close in the furze the linnet lies,
The lark's shrill voice is mute,
No longer from the cherry-bough
The blackbird tunes his flute;
The white-throat and the nightingale
To sunnier climes have flown,
And on the berried holly-bough
The redbreast sings alone.

Ah, sweet and solemn are the days
That mark the dying year,
Waking, like music, in the heart
Some slumbering memories dear—
Of times gone by, of friends long dead,
Of happy fleeting hours,
When our fond youth was one long dream
Of love and joy and flowers.



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